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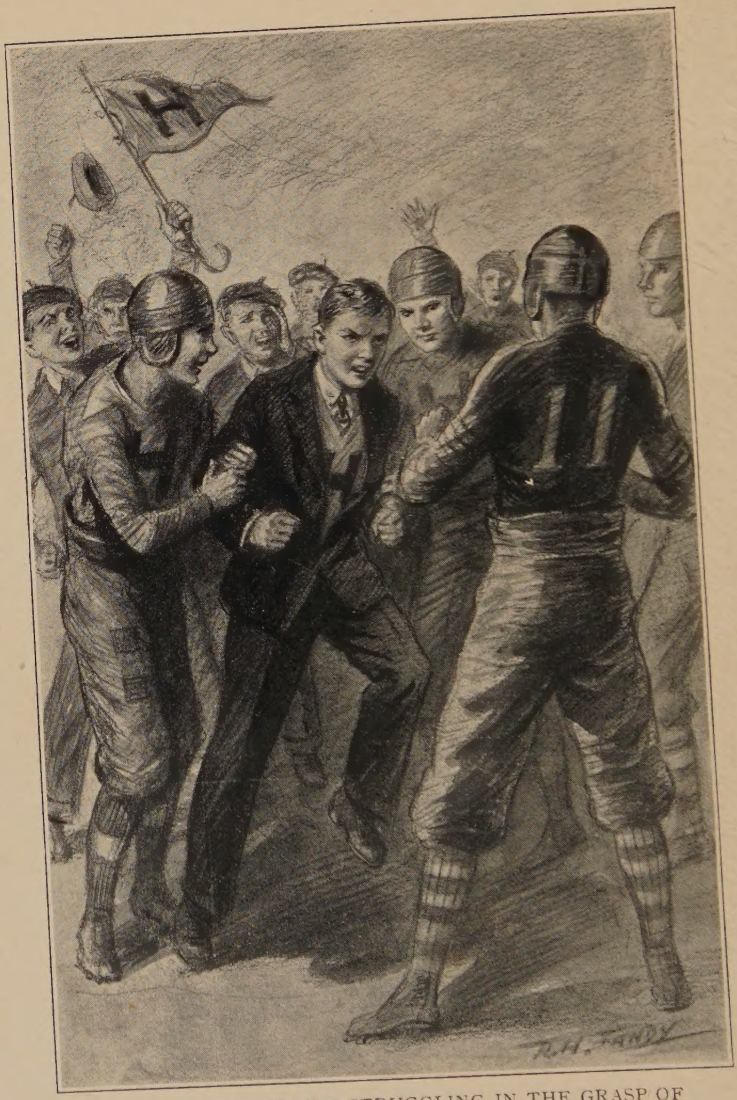
Jim

from Aunt Inez

Dec. 25, 1931



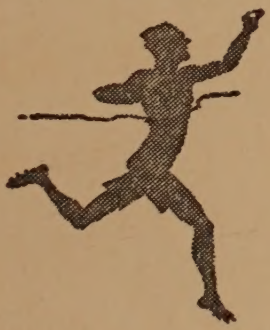
IN A MOMENT HE WAS STRUGGLING IN THE GRASP OF TWO OF THE HILLTON TEAM.

Frontispiece (*Page* 88)

FOR THE HONOR OF THE SCHOOL

A Story of School Life
and Interscholastic Sport

by
RALPH HENRY BARBOUR
Author of
"The Half-Back"



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TO THAT SCHOOL,

WHEREVER IT MAY BE,

WHOSE ATHLETICS ARE PUREST,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

FOREWORD

Tempting boys to be what they should be—giving them in wholesome form what they want—that is the purpose and power of Scouting. To help parents and leaders of youth secure *books boys like best* that are also best for boys, the Boy Scouts of America organized EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY. The books included, formerly sold at prices ranging from $1.50 to $2.00 but, by special arangement with the several publishers interested, are now sold in the EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY Edition at $1.00 per volume.

The books of EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY were selected by the Library Commission of the Boy Scouts of America, consisting of George F. Bowerman, Librarian, Public Library of the District of Columbia; Harrison W. Craver, Director, Engineering Societies Library, New York City; Claude G. Leland, Superintendent, Bureau of Libraries, Board of Education, New York City; Edward F. Stevens, Librarian, Pratt Institute Free Library, Brooklyn, N. Y., and Franklin K. Mathiews. Chief Scout Li-

brarian. Only such books were chosen by the Commission as proved to be, by *a nation wide canvas,* most in demand by the boys themselves. Their popularity is further attested by the fact that in the EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY Edition, more than a million and a quarter copies of these books have already been sold.

We know so well, are reminded so often of the worth of the good book and great, that too often we fail to observe or understand the influence for good of a boy's recreational reading. Such books may influence him for good or ill as profoundly as his play activities, of which they are a vital part. The needful thing is to find stories in which the heroes have the characteristics boys so much admire—unquenchable courage, immense resourcefulness, absolute fidelity, conspicuous greatness. We believe the books of EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY measurably well meet this challenge.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA,

James E. West

Chief Scout Executive.

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FOR THE HONOR OF THE SCHOOL

CHAPTER I

THE CROSS-COUNTRY RACE

"This way, Hillton!"

In response ten boys dressed in white shirts bearing the crimson H, white running pants, and spiked shoes disentangled themselves from the crowd about the dressing-room door and assembled at the corner of the grand stand. The youth who had uttered the command was the captain of the Hillton Academy Cross-country Team, and, with the runners clustered close about him, he gave his last instructions before the race in low and earnest tones:

"Fellows, we must win this, you know. It's going to be hard work; House and Beaming, of St. Eustace, are difficult men to beat, but I think we can do it. Northrop and I will try to attend to them. The rest of you must try your best for the next places. I don't believe there is a dangerous runner in Shrewsburg's team; at all events, there aren't four. If they get less than four in ahead of us it won't matter. Save yourselves for the last three

quarters of a mile, and don't try to leap the 'combination jump' or the 'Liverpool'; get over by the side railings or run up the braces, as you've done in practice. It's not style over the obstacles that's going to win this race, but good hard running and lots of wind at the end. Keep your strength till you need it most. Don't try to get ahead at the start; let the other fellow make the pace. And right now, while I think of it, do try not to take off too soon at the water jump. Moore, you try to remember about that, will you? And be sure before you start that your shoes are all right; it's mighty tough work running with a scraped heel, I can tell you. That's all; only keep yourselves moving, fellows, until the line-up."

In obedience to the warning, shoes were looked after again and the cotton wool stuffed carefully between them and the ankles to preclude chafing, and the boys limbered up their legs and kept the blood circulating by stepping gingerly about the track on their toes—for all the world like a band of Indians performing a war dance. Presently the dressing-room door was flung open and twenty other boys trotted out and followed the example of the Hillton team. Of the twenty, ten bore on their sleeveless shirts the blue monogram of St. Eustace and ten the great green S of Shrewsburg High School. The distance judges had already taken themselves off to their posts of duty about the course, and the other officials were gathered in consultation at the starting line.

It was a bleak and cheerless Saturday afternoon. Overhead leaden clouds hung low, and the fluttering red flags that marked the course of the coming contest alone lent color to the gray November landscape.

"Smells like snow, Wayne," said the Hillton captain to a runner who stood—or rather danced—beside him. "I hope it won't. The ground's slippery enough now."

"Rather wish it would, myself," was the reply. "If I could get decently stuck in a snow bank I'd like it a heap better than finishing last in the race."

"You won't do that, you know. Lots of those Shrewsburg chaps are slow men. I wish I was as certain that we'd win the race as I am that you'll finish well."

"Well, I'll do my best, Don, but you mustn't expect too much," said the other boy anxiously. "I wouldn't have gone into it if you hadn't said that it didn't much matter whether I came in first or last."

"And it doesn't; but I am certain, Wayne, that if you try you can finish well up in the bunch. I think you've got the making of a good runner. Of course, three weeks of training—that is, the kind of training you've done"—the other lad grinned—"doesn't amount to a great deal when it comes to a four-mile race. After the first round pick some St. Eustace fellow and stick to him; you'll be surprised to find how much better it goes if some one is making pace for you. By Jove! I do hope we can win today! This is your first term, Wayne, and of course you

don't know how the fellows feel about it; but I tell you we'd rather down St. Eustace than—than eat!"

"They won last year, didn't they?"

"St. Eustace? Yes, that chap Beaming over there, the little chap that looks like a fox terrier, came in first and won the individual championship. Then House finished next about three yards behind, and I got in ten yards or so back of House. Then they got two more men in before another Hillton runner was in sight. Oh, it was a regular walk-over, Wayne. Come on, they're ready."

And Donald Cunningham and Wayne Gordon hurried to the starting line. The former was a tall, lithe youth with not an ounce of superfluous flesh over the firm muscles. The pink hue of his bare arms and legs told of perfect physical condition and his thin face showed energy and resolution. His dark eyes—rather thoughtful eyes they were—had a habit of looking very straight at you as he spoke, and lent an expression of serious dignity to the countenance.

His companion was in appearance and temperament a notable contrast. While scarcely an inch shorter than the captain of the Cross-country Team, Wayne Gordon, by reason of much unnecessary flesh, appeared lower in stature, and lacked the fitness that comes of rigorous training. His muscles, despite some spasmodic practice for the day's event, were still soft. While Donald's face showed energy, Wayne's told of careless good humor and, especially about the lower part, of pertinacity which might under certain

conditions develop into stubbornness. The eyes were brown, frank, and honest, and at this moment were gazing before him in smiling tensity.

The starter had cocked his pistol and the referee was warning the runners as to the penalty for starting before the signal. The onlookers, fully two hundred of them in all, were assembled along both sides of the cinder track, and were adding their voices to the referee's, to the total overwhelming of the latter. The runners were formed in two lines across the track, their shoe spikes griping the earth and their bodies poised forward.

"Has every one got his number?" asked the referee. "Remember, the judges can't register you if they don't see your numbers."

Several fluttering papers were repinned to the white shirts and the starter raised his voice.

"Are you ready?" A moment's silence ensued.

Bang! The pistol cracked sharply and the runners swept in a bunch around the corner of the cinder track, gained the turf, and headed toward where the red flags indicated the first obstacle.

Of these obstacles the course held six, as follows: A "Liverpool," a "combination," two hedge jumps, a bank jump, and a water jump. The first consisted of a four-foot dry ditch in front of a five-foot rail fence, followed, in turn, by a broad and high hedge. The "combination" consisted of a low bank surmounted by a two-foot hedge and followed

by a four-foot dry ditch. The hedge jumps differed only in height, the first being three feet and the second three feet six inches. The bank jump was four feet high. All these were comparatively easy of surmountal in comparison with the water jump. The hedges and bank might be scrambled over, the "combination" could be fallen over—one didn't mind a few bruises—and the "Liverpool" could be climbed over or surmounted by means of the fences on either side or the stays which held up the rails. But the water jump defied every method save a long, clean jump. An eighteen-inch hedge was constructed on the bank of a brook that came under the railway track and crossed the golf course to the lake. The brook was here eight feet broad and several feet deep in the middle, and constituted a very pretty obstacle in the way of a youth tired out by a one- or two-mile run and the conquest of all the lesser obstacles. Only on the last round of the course was the water jump omitted.

The distance to be run was four miles, or three times around the course. Starting at the grand stand on the campus the red flags guided the runners across the end of the golf links near Home Hole, then bore away south along the bank of the Hudson River, crossing the brook over the little rustic bridge, and taking the railroad track at a right angle between Railroad Bunker and Academy Hole. With a short turn the course then swept back across the railway again to the water jump, High and Track Bunkers, the

"Look Off"
Railroad
Double Jump
4 ft.
Combination:
2 ft. hedge on mound,
4 ft. ditch
Hedge Jump
3 ft. 6 in.
3/3 mile
Hampton bunker
Hedge Jump
3 ft.
Lake
Bridge
RIVER
Sandy bunker
Brook
The Grove
Water Jump: 3 in hedge
8 ft. brook
3 miles
The Hill
High Hole
High bunker
Liverpool:
4 ft. any direction,
4 ft. rails,
5 1/2 ft. hedge
1 mile
Brook bunker
Home hole
Course is 1 1/3 miles long
Plan of Cross-Country Course, Hillton N.Y.
Drawn by S.C.
Start & Finish Line
Grand Stand
Hillton Station
Station Road
Academy 1/2 mile
Turners Meadow

campus, the grand stand, and the yelling groups of spectators.

The plan of the course here reproduced was made by Donald Cunningham for the use of the Cross-country Team, and will, perhaps, aid the reader to a better understanding of what follows. Paddy cast aspersions on this effort, but Don was always very proud of it.

Each competing school entered a team of ten boys. Points were apportioned according to the position of the runners at the finish: thus, the first one completing the three rounds of the course scored one; the second, two; the third, three; and so on down to the last, only the leading four in each team being considered. Besides a prize for the winning team, a silver cup, the first runner in was awarded the individual trophy, a bronze medal. Cross-country running requires speed, strength, endurance, and pluck—especially pluck. The course presents an infinite variety of surface: slippery turf, loose gravel, mud, and sometimes sand in which the feet sink to the ankles. Unlike the ordinary running surface, the cross-country course delights in inequality: a level width of turf is followed by a sharp rise; a stretch of muddy road by a gully whose steep sides require the utmost exertion from the panting runner.

The course at Hillton was no exception; in fact, it was more than usually severe. Besides the artificial obstacles—such as the hedges, the bank, and the water jump—the rail-

road track, fenced on either side, and three golf bunkers added their terrors to the race. To-day the ground, which had been frozen hard the week before, was soft and treacherous from the noonday thaw, and even spiked shoes found slow and difficult going.

Six hundred yards from the start the field of runners had spread out into three divisions. Fifty yards ahead House and Beaming, the two St. Eustace cracks, led Donald Cunningham by a stride, while close upon their heels ran Moore, of Hillton, and two Shrewsburg boys. Back of them came a little group of a dozen whose shirts showed the crimson H, the blue monogram, and the green S in about equal proportions. Farther to the rear the rest of the thirty struggled and straggled along the course, already practically out of the race so far as their effect on the final score was concerned. At the "Liverpool" the St. Eustace leaders took the ditch at a bound, gained the top of the fence, balanced themselves a second, and cleared the hedge. The Hillton captain and Moore used other tactics. Without lessening his speed each planted one spiked toe on a brace that helped to support the fence, gained the top bar in two strides, and cleared the hedge. The Shrewsburg runners tried neither of these styles, but climbed the fence, squirmed across the hedge, and dropped helter-skelter to the ground, to find themselves farther behind the four leaders. As each runner surmounted the "Liverpool" the distance judges stationed there registered his number.

From the grand stand every foot of the far-stretching course was plainly in sight, and now the first men looked like white specks as they took the turn, scrambled over the second hedge jump, and headed toward home. Many of the watchers deserted the finish line and clustered about the water jump, loudly expressing the hope that some one would "take a bath." They climbed on to the fences that led up to the obstacle and waited impatiently for the runners to appear. Suddenly two white-clad figures were for a moment seen sharply against the gray of the hills as they took the railroad track in a bound; then they were climbing the fence and speeding toward the watchers. Simultaneously three others came into view, followed a moment later by a fourth.

"Cunningham's closed up!" cried the Hillton supporters joyfully. "House has dropped back!"

The two captains of the rival teams bore down on the jump, their faces flushed with exertion, but their legs moving gracefully as they put yard after yard behind them. Neither Beaming nor Cunningham slowed down perceptibly at the hedge; each found the take-off at the same moment and swept cleanly over the water side by side amid the plaudits of the spectators. House, Moore, and a Shrewsburg lad followed in the next minute, gained their applause, and went on to the grand stand a dozen yards behind the leaders. A second Shrewsburg runner, plainly in distress, lessened his pace at the water jump, took off too soon, and

landed knee-deep on the muddy margin of the brook. But he was out in a moment and gained a hearty cheer by the spirited spurt he made after the others.

Then the watchers had a moment of waiting ere the next group of runners reached them. They came pouring over the railroad track and fence by ones and twos, helter-skelter, with a St. Eustace man a bare yard to the good and a Hillton runner, Northrop, trying hard to reach him. Over the hedge and water they went—the St. Eustace man, Northrop, a Shrewsburg runner, another wearer of the blue monogram, and another Shrewsburg boy—all clearing the difficult jump in good style save the latter, who plumped squarely into the middle of the brook, and so delighted the watching lads that many of them fell from the fences in sheer joy. Wayne Gordon came next and received a shower of spray in his face as he cleared the brook and sped onward. A St. Eustace boy followed the example of the unfortunate Shrewsburg chap, and when the rest of the bunch had passed the two crawled out and took up the running once more with disgusted looks and spiritless gait.

By this time the leaders had reached a point across the field and halfway around the second lap. Donald Cunningham and Beaming, of St. Eustace, still fought for first place, and House had left his Shrewsburg rival behind and was close upon their heels, Moore, of Hillton, a few paces off. Shrewsburg seemed out of the race. Her first two men were now but a yard ahead of the leaders in the sec-

ond group, one still running easily and well, the other laboring at every stride. Northrop managed to come up to the third St. Eustace runner at the "combination jump," and by superior work over the obstacle drew several yards ahead. Wayne Gordon moved up to the front rank of the followers, and the race momentarily gained in interest to the spectators.

Again the leaders made the turn at the far end of the course and headed back toward the water jump, overtaking several of the slower runners who were still struggling on their first round. Cunningham, Beaming, and House were practically side by side as they approached the jump, and the cheers from the onlookers increased in volume. Beaming spurted and took the leap in exhibition style, and Cunningham and House took off almost ere he had set foot to earth. The latter landed well and sped on, but the former, to the consternation of the Hillton throng, while he cleared the water, stumbled on the bank and dropped to his knees. In an instant he had gained his feet and taken up the race again, but his first stride proved to the dismayed supporters of the crimson that he was out of the running. One—two—three steps he took; then he swerved to the side of the course, and would have fallen but for the ready arms that were stretched toward him. He struggled from them.

"Let go, fellows," he panted. "I'm all right; just—turned my ankle."

The boys drew back and he started on. limping woefully.

A dozen yards he traversed ere he gave up and threw himself on the turf. A lad in disreputable football attire was the first to reach him.

"What's the matter, Don? Are you hurt?" he cried anxiously.

There was no answer, and he leaned down and drew a bare arm from before a face whereon the tears were trickling.

"Keep the fellows away, Paddy," whispered Don huskily. "I'll—be all right—in a minute. I—I—my ankle's sprained, I guess; I can't run—a step; and—and, oh, Paddy, we've lost the race!"

CHAPTER II

WHAT A LAUGH DID

A FEW minutes later Don was sitting in a corner of the grand stand, smothered in a pile of blankets and with his injured ankle bound in wet bandages. Beside him were two boys of about his own age, one of whom, the lad whom he had addressed as Paddy, was solicitously slopping cold water from a tin can over his ankle at frequent intervals. Nothing serious, Professor Beck had decided, only a strained tendon; and so Don had been helped to his present position, from where he could watch the race run out. He looked pale and woe-begone; but he managed to smile now and then in answer to Paddy's sallies.

"Paddy" Breen—his real name was Charles—had been given his nickname two years before, when he was a little red-headed junior too small to resent it had he been so inclined. Paddy's forbears had been Irish a generation or two back, and although there was little about the boy to suggest the fact, barring his red hair and gray eyes and sunny nature, the name was somehow distinctly appropriate, and it had stuck to him through his junior and lower middle years

and promised to stick forever. Paddy played center on the first eleven, a position for which his broad shoulders and hips and great strength eminently fitted him. To-day he was attired in a faded and torn red sweater, a pair of equally disreputable moleskin trousers, two red and black striped stockings whose appearance told a story of many battles, a pair of badly scuffed tan shoes, and a golf cap of such bold and striking tones of brown, green, and scarlet as to stamp it at once as brand-new.

The lad who sat on the other side of Don was of even more generous build than Paddy Breen. Dave Merton's shoulders were broad and set well back, giving him a look of great power. He was, perhaps, the least bit overgrown for his seventeen years, for he topped Paddy by an inch and Don by two. But he looked very healthy and happy, and was as good-natured a fellow as any at the Academy. His hair was black and his eyes dark, giving him a more somber coloring than his bosom companion, Paddy, but, like the latter, he preferred smiling to frowning. Dave had two great ambitions in life at present—namely, to throw the hammer farther than any other Hilltonian and to excel at study. The latter semed quite within the range of possibility, but as for Dave's hammer throwing it was a school joke at which even Dave could laugh. Paddy Breen was a brilliant pupil; Dave Merton a hard-working one. Paddy was an excellent football player; Dave an indifferent performer with the weights. Both were leaders in their classes

—Dave was a senior—and popular throughout the school. Their friendship was as much a joke as Dave's hammer throwing and the two were inseparable.

"Beaten?" Paddy was saying scornfully. "Never, me boy. Sure 'tis only beginning we are; just wait till we git our breath!" Paddy, as though to lend indorsement to his nickname, at times dropped into a brogue acquired with great labor from such classics as Charles O'Malley and Tom Burke.

"I only wish we had begun earlier in the race, Paddy," answered Don hopelessly. "Who is ahead in the bunch there, Dave—can you make out?"

The leaders, House and Beaming, were now far up the course and the next group of runners were some distance behind. Farther back of them other contestants straggled. Two runners were out of the race. A Shrewsburg boy had given up on the second round and was philosophically watching the contest from the top of a distant bank, and a Hillton fellow, Turner, had gone to the dressing room suffering with an attack of cramp. In answer to Don's question Dave studied the distant runners for a space in silence.

"Well, that's Northrop in the lead all right, Don, and the next two fellows are St. Eustace men. Then Moore and a Shrewsburg chap, and another St. Eustace man, and —and one of our team—I can't make out who." Dave looked frowningly across the field.

"Which one?" asked Paddy. "The fellow with the

long legs just taking the hedge? Why, man, that's Wayne, of course; no mistaking him."

"So it is," answered Don. "He's doing well. It would be queer if he managed to keep his present place and got in third, wouldn't it?"

"Well, he won't," said Dave, "for Jones has passed him. Good old Jones! Just look at him spurt!"

"Those two men just behind Northrop are Keller and Gould, of St. Eustace," said Don. "Well, I guess we're dished. House and Beaming are sure of first and second place; Northrop ought to get third; then either Gould or Keller is pretty certain to finish ahead of Moore—perhaps both will; that would make the score something like twelve to twenty-four, supposing we got three men in after Keller and Gould."

"There's a good half mile to cover yet, my lad," said Paddy cheerfully. "There's lots may happen in that distance. Look there; those fellows are changing all around. And, by Jove, fellows, look at Beaming!"

Beaming was dropping back and House was alone at the turn of the course. And some one—it seemed although it *must* be Northrop, of Hillton—was closing up the long gap between the leaders and the next group at a fabulous pace. And even as the three boys on the grand stand strained their sight a second runner left the group as though it were standing still and shot after Northrop —if it was Northrop. The runners were too far off to

allow of the watchers being certain as to their identity, but a look of hope crept into Don's face. There seemed nothing to do save wait until the runners appeared at the railroad a third of a mile away, until Paddy spied a pair of field glasses in the hands of a boy in the throng below and unceremoniously gained possession of them. He passed them to Don, and the latter, leaning for support on Dave and Paddy, swept the course with them.

"Northrop's ahead of Beaming!" he cried. "And Jones is almost up to him! House is leading by forty yards or more! A Shrewsburg fellow is running even with Keller and Gould! Paddy, we've still got a show!"

"Where's Wayne?" asked Dave.

"And Jones?" asked Paddy.

"Wayne? I—can't—see him. Hold on; yes, there he is! He's at the back of the bunch; a Shrewsburg fellow's passing him hand over fist. Jones is gaining, Paddy; he's creeping up. There they go over the bank jump. Some fellow's done up—it's Keller; Jones has passed him." Don excitedly turned his glasses toward a point nearer home. "House still leads and is spurting, hang him! Northrop's fifty yards behind him, and Beaming—no, fellows, it's Moore! Moore's in third place!"

"What?" cried Dave. "What's up with Beaming?"

"Don't know; he looks tuckered. Hello!"

"What is it, Don? Talk out; don't be so plaguey slow!"

"A Shrewsburg chap has gained fifth place and looks as though he were going to beat Beaming in the next twenty yards. What do you think of that? Jones and Wayne are both gaining. By Jove, fellows, we may get it yet! Let's go down to the finish; help me down, Dave."

"If only Jones and Wayne can last," said Paddy, "we could win, couldn't we? But Wayne—" Paddy shook his head as they descended from the stand and went toward the finish line. "Do you thing he can hold out, Don?"

Don shook his head dubiously.

At that moment Wayne was wondering the same thing. He had surprised himself by staying in the race up to the present moment. He had entered the contest only to oblige Don. "I don't ask you to hurt yourself," the latter had explained. "Drop out when you are tired. It will be good practice and will save us from entering with only nine fellows." So Wayne had laughingly consented. As he had passed runner after runner in the first two rounds of the course he had begun to ask himself what it meant. Don had told him that he had the making of a good long-distance man, but he hadn't given much heed to the statement; apparently Don was right. After the first mile he had begun to suffer a little, and now, with the race almost over, he would like to have dropped out and spent about ten minutes lying on his back, but it seemed a poor thing to give up so near the end, and so he found himself still pounding away, with his legs very stiff and his breath ap-

parently about to fail him at every effort. He realized that the ground had become softer and more slippery and that snow was falling. Then he crossed the track and struggled on toward the next obstacle, a three-and-a-half-foot hedge.

Wayne hated the hedges. He was too heavy to hurdle them well, and he invariably jumped short and lost precious time getting his feet untangled. Luckily he was done with that nightmare the water jump, since on the last round it was avoided and the course led over the brook by the railroad and thence straight down to the finish. As he approached the hedge Wayne drew himself together for a last effort, and at the take-off put all his strength into the leap. But unfortunately the turf was bare at that spot and his foot slipped as he jumped.

"Thank goodness!" he thought, when he had stopped rolling. "Now I can lie here decently until the whole thing's over with!"

But his sensation of joyous relief was rudely dispelled. Over the hedge leaped a boy with a blue monogram on his shirt, who, as he caught sight of Wayne's predicament, grinned broadly. In a trice Wayne had struggled to his feet and had taken up the chase race again, rage in his heart.

"He laughed at me, hang him!" he panted. "I'll just beat him out if I die for *it*!"

The St. Eustace boy was several yards ahead already,

but Wayne threw back his head and ran desperately. A roar of voices from down the field told him that the first man had finished. He put every ounce of strength into the struggle, thinking nothing of who was winning, only determined to beat the chap who had laughed at him. And as he crossed the railroad the knowledge that he was gaining on the St. Eustace runner brought joy to his heart.

Down at the finish line the air was filled with the cheers of the St. Eustace supporters, who, though few in number, were strong of voice. House had finished first and captured the individual championship and prize. And now, almost side by side, and struggling valiantly for second place, came the two Hillton men, Northrop and Moore, and the wearers of the crimson went wild with joy and shouted until both runners had crossed the line, Northrop in the lead, and had been led away to the dressing room.

Don was busy with pencil and paper now, while Paddy looked over his shoulder and Dave scowled up the course and waited impatiently for the next runner to swing into sight around the corner of the little knoll that hid the railroad track from the finish line. Then two white figures broke into view almost simultaneously.

"A Shrewsburg fellow and a St. Eustace fellow!" cried Dave. "I think the last is Beaming. Yes, it is!"

The runner with the green S won the line a good three yards ahead of the almost breathless Beaming, and a little group of Shrewsburg High School fellows broke into ap-

plause. Beaming had to be well-nigh carried from the course, although protesting faintly that he could walk.

Don's paper now held the following figures:

Hillton.	St. Eustace.	Shrewsburg.
2	1	4
3	5	

"Two men each and we're one figure ahead," whispered Don. "There's some one, Dave—three fellows. Who are they?"

"St. Eustace fellow ahead," answered Dave.

"It's Gould!" cried a voice from near by, and the supporters of the down-river academy cheered wildly.

"Hurrah!" yelled Paddy. "Erin go bragh! There's good old Jones! And a Shrewsburg fellow hot after him."

Don tried to jump, but found he couldn't because of his strained ankle and contented himself with a hair-raising yell. Then he added a 6 to the St. Eustace score, an 8 to that of Shrewsburg, and a 7 to Hillton's row of figures. For Gould, Jones, and the Shrewsburg runner crossed the line in the order given amid the cheers of the three rival contingents.

"It's a tie so far," shouted Paddy, as he added up the few figures. "St. Eustace has twelve points, Dave, and so have we. By Jove! it all depends on the next man, Don, doesn't it? Can you see any one, Dave?"

"No one in sight yet. Let's hope the first will be a

Hillton chap, fellows. But even if it isn't the score's bound to be close. Wonder what's become of 'Old Virginia'?"

That was a nickname that Paddy had bestowed upon Wayne Gordon in allusion to the latter's native State.

"I'm afraid Wayne's dropped out of it," answered Don, with a tremble in his voice, "but still——"

"St. Eustace wins!"

Half a dozen voices took up the cry as a fleet-footed runner whose breast bore the blue monogram came quickly into sight. The three boys groaned in unison. St. Eustace's fourth man was speeding toward the finish.

"Done for," whispered Dave.

"Wait a bit!" cried Paddy. "There's two of them there. Who's the second chap?"

Paddy was right. Directly behind the St. Eustace runner sped a second youth, so close that he seemed to be treading upon the former's heels.

"It's one of our fellows, Don!" cried Dave.

"I don't think so. I—oh, why doesn't he come out so that we can see!"

"I'm afraid it's another Shrewsburg chump," said Paddy dolefully. "Oh, hang the luck, anyhow!"

"Wait!" cried Don. "He's coming out! There—there he comes! He's trying to pass, and—and——"

"It's Wayne!" cried Dave and Paddy in unison.

And Wayne it was. Slowly, doggedly, he drew from his place back of the St. Eustace man and fought his way

inch by inch alongside. The cheering spectators saw the wearer of the blue glance swiftly at the Hillton runner and throw back his head. But the boy beside him refused to be thrown off and down the course they came together, their tired limbs keeping time to the frenzied cheers of the throng.

"St. Eustace wins! Keller's ahead!"

"Hillton's race! Gordon leads!"

And then, high above the babel of a hundred voices sounded a mighty shout from Paddy:

"Come on, 'Old Virginia!'"

Wayne, racing along stride for stride with the St. Eustace runner, heard the cry and made a final, despairing effort.

And then the crowd was thick about him, Dave and Paddy were holding him up, Don was hugging him ecstatically, and the fellows were laughing and shouting as though crazy; and Wayne, panting and weak, wondered what it all meant.

It only meant that Hillton had won by a yard and that the final score stood: Hillton, 21; St. Eustace, 22; Shrewsburg, 43.

CHAPTER III

IN 15 BRADLEY

It was getting dark in the study of No. 15 Bradley Hall, and Wayne laid his book down on the window seat and fell to looking idly out of the window. The broad expanse of the Hudson River was visible for several miles, and its quiet surface reflected all the tones of gold and crimson with which the western sky was aglow. Far to the left a little dark spot marked the location of the railway station, and the steel rails, stretching to the southward, caught the sunset glint here and there and looked like shafts of fire. The meadow and the campus were still green, and the station road was blotched with the purple shadows of hedge and tree. To the left a tiny steamer was creeping from sight beyond the island and the far-stretching marsh across the water was brightly yellow with autumn grass.

Inside the room the shadows were beginning to gather wherever the glow from the two windows failed to reach. They had already hidden the bookcase near the hall door and Don's armchair was only a formless hulk in the gloom.

The door to the bedroom was ajar and through it the shadows were silently creeping, for that room was on the back of the building and its one window gave but scant light at sunset time. The study was a comfortable-looking den. There was a big green-topped table in the center, flanked by easy-chairs, and holding a student lamp, an ornamental inkstand, a number of books, and a miscellaneous litter of paper, pens, golf balls, gloves, and caps. A lounge, rather humpy from long and hard usage, disputed a corner of the apartment with a low bookcase whose top afforded a repository for photographs and a couple of hideous vases which for years past had "gone with the room." There was a fireplace on one side which to-day held no fire. The mantel was decorated with more photographs and three pewter mugs, Wayne's trophies of the cinder track. Some tennis racquets, three broken and repaired golf sticks, and a riding whip were crossed in a bewildering fashion above a picture of an English rowing regatta, and on either side hung framed "shingles" of the Senior Debating Society and the Hillton Academy Golf Club. Other pictures adorned the walls here and there; two businesslike straight-backed chairs were placed where they could not fail to be fallen over in the dark; and a bright-colored but somewhat threadbare carpet was on the floor. There were two windows, for No. 15 was a corner study, and in each was a comfortable seat generously furnished with pillows. At this moment both seats were occupied. In one lounged

Wayne; in the other Don was still trying to study by the fading light. His left foot was perched carefully on a cushion, for the injured ankle was not yet fully strong, although nearly a week had elapsed since the cross-country run and his accident. Finally Don, too, laid aside his book.

"Want to light up, Wayne?"

"No, let's be lazy; it's so jolly in the twilight. I like to watch sunsets, don't you? They're sort of mysterious and—and sad."

"Hello!" laughed Don. "You must be a bit homesick."

"No, not exactly, though the sunset did look a bit like some we have down home. I wish you could see a Virginia sunset, Don."

"Aren't they a good deal like any other sunset?"

"No, I don't think so. From our house at home the sun always sets across a little valley and back of a hill with a lot of dark trees on it. And there's always a heap of blue wood smoke in the air and the woods are kind of hazy, you know. Wish I was there," he added, with a tinge of melancholy in his voice.

"Cheer up," said Don. "You'll feel better after supper. You're homesick. I used to be, my first year. Used to think I'd give most anything for a sight of the Charles River and the marshes, as they look from the library window at home. But I got over it. When I began to feel

sad and virtuous I'd go out and swat a football or jump over things. That's the best way to get rid of homesickness, Wayne; go in for athletics and get your blood running right. You don't have much chance to think about home when you're leaping hurdles or trying to bust your own record for the hundred yards."

"I should think not," laughed Wayne. "I know I wasn't homesick the other day when I was chasing around country and jumping over those silly hedges; but I reckon I'd rather be a bit homesick than have my legs ache and my lungs burst."

"They won't when you're in training," answered Don. "But you did great work that day; we were awfully proud of you."

"So you say, and I suppose it's all right, only I keep telling you that I wasn't trying to win the team race; I was just trying to beat that blamed St. Eustace chump who laughed at me when I was sitting comfortably on the ground there. Just as though any fellow mightn't fall over those old hedges, hang him!"

"Well, don't you mind," answered Don soothingly. "He isn't laughing now, you can bet; that laugh cost his school the race."

Wayne made no reply. He had gathered the pillows in a heap under his head and was lying on his back nursing his knees. It was almost dark outdoors and in the room the shadows held full sway. Across from Don's window

the lights in Masters Hall were coming out and throwing dim shafts upon the broad gravel path.

"Wayne, I wish you'd go into training for the track team," continued Don. "All you need is some good hard practice to make you a dandy runner. Why don't you?"

"What's the good?" asked Wayne carelessly. "I have hard enough work as it is trying to learn my lessons without losing a lot of time running around a track. Besides, it's so tiresome."

"Don't talk nonsense," answered Don. "You have hard work with your lessons because you won't study, and you know it. You could do a lot of training in the time you spend now in loafing. And, look here, Wayne, if you go in for athletics you can study a lot better; really. I know; I've tried both ways. And besides, you won't have to run around a track much until long after winter term begins; hard work doesn't start until February. Of course, if you've made up your mind to be a duffer, I won't say anything more about it. But I'm captain of the track team, and I know you would make a bully runner and I want you to help me out if you will. We're going to have a hard time next spring to find good men for the mile and half-mile events, and if we don't win one of them I'm afraid St. Eustace or Collegiate is sure of first place. I wish old Hillton might come out on top next year. Think of it, Wayne, this is my second year as captain, and my last, for I shan't take it again, and if we are beaten next spring it

will be a nice record to leave behind, won't it? Two defeats and no victories! Hang it, we've got to win, Wayne!"

Wayne laughed lazily.

"What's so funny?" demanded Don rather crossly.

"You—you're so serious. The idea of caring so much about whether we get beaten or not next spring. Why, it's months away yet. If you've got to worry about it, why not wait awhile?"

Don was too vexed to reply and Wayne went on in his careless, good-natured tones.

"You fellows up North here are so crazy about athletics. Of course, they're good enough in their way, I reckon, but seems to me that you don't think about much else. I don't mean that you don't study—you're all awful grinds—but you never have any time for—for——"

"What—loafing?" asked Don sarcastically.

"No, not exactly that, but—but—oh, hunting and riding and being sociable generally. Do you shoot?"

"Not much; I've potted beach birds and plovers once or twice."

"Well, that's the kind of sport I like. Down home we shoot quail, you know; it's right good fun. And next month the fox hunting begins."

"I think I should like that," exclaimed Don eagerly, forgetting his ill humor. "I've never ridden to hounds. Isn't it hard jumping fences and things?"

"Hard—on a horse? Shucks! Compared to leaping over hedges on your feet it's about the easiest thing in the world. All you have to do is to sit still."

"Well, it sounds easy," answered Don dubiously, "but I should think sitting still on a horse that was plunging over a rail fence would be rather difficult; seems to me that the easiest thing would be to fall off. Did you ever fall?"

"Twice. Once I hurt my shoulder a little. Of course we boys don't do any hard riding; dad won't let me go out very often, and when he does he always goes along. You see, once I went fox hunting instead of going to school, and he found out about it."

"What kind of a school was it you went to?"

"Oh, a little private school kept by an old codger who used to be a professor at the University. We fellows had a pretty easy time of it; when we didn't want to study we didn't, which was mighty often."

"Well, you won't find it so easy here," said Don.

"Oh, I've found that out already," answered Wayne ruefully. "We have so many studies here I can't begin to keep track of them all. I never know whether I ought to be at a recitation or fussing with dumb-bells in the gymnasium."

"Well, you'll get used to it after a while and like it immensely, and think that there isn't another place in the world like Hillton. And when you do you'll care more

whether we win or get beaten at athletics and football; and then——"

There came a loud hammering at the door.

"Enter Paddy and David!" cried Don.

Dave Merton alone entered, and closing the door behind him promptly fell over an armchair.

"Confound you fellows! why can't you keep your room decent? A chap's always breaking his shins when he comes here. Where's Paddy?"

"What, have you become separated?" cried Don. "Light the gas, Wayne, and let us view the unaccustomed sight of Dave without Paddy."

"He said he was coming up here after he dressed. I left him at the gym." Dave stumbled against a straight-backed chair, placed it on its back just inside the door, and groped his way to a seat beside Don. "Hope he'll break his shins too, when he comes," he said grimly.

"What have you two inseparables been up to this afternoon?" asked Don.

"Oh, Paddy's been doing stunts with a football, and he's awfully annoyed over something, and I've been tossing a hammer around the landscape; that's all."

"And did you manage to break another goal post?"

"No; couldn't seem to hit anything to-day, although I *did* come within a few yards of Greene."

Another thunderous knocking was heard, and, without

awaiting an invitation, Paddy came in, and the sound of breaking wood followed as he landed on the chair.

"I'm afraid I've bust something," he said cheerfully, as he struggled to his feet. "And serves you right, too. Is Dave here?"

"Haven't seen him," answered Wayne.

"Wonder where the silly chump went to. Where are you, you fellows?" Paddy felt his way around the table and gropingly found a seat between Don and Dave. "He said he was coming up here before supper." A faint chuckle aroused his suspicions and the sound of a struggle followed. Then Paddy's voice arose in triumphant tones.

"'Tis you, yer spalpeen. There's only one ugly nose like that in school."

"Ouch!" yelled Dave. "Let go!"

"Is it you?" asked Paddy grimly.

"Yes."

"Are you a spalpeen?"

"Yes, oh yes. Ouch!"

"All right." Paddy deposited Dave on the floor and arranged himself comfortably in the window.

"Dave says you're annoyed, Paddy. Who's been ill-treating the poor little lad?" asked Don, when the laughter had subsided and Dave had retreated to the other window seat.

"Don, it's kilt I am intoirely," answered Paddy. "For thirty mortal minutes Gardiner had me snapping back the

ball to that butter-fingered Bowles. If he doesn't put another quarter-back in soon I shall hand in me resignation. And to make things worse Gardiner stayed up all last night and thought out a most wonderful new trick play, and to-day he tried to put us through it. And, oh dear! I wish you could have seen the backs all tearing around like pigs with a dog after them, bumping into each other, getting in each other's way and all striking the line at different places and asking, please wouldn't we let them through! Oh dear! oh dear! And that chap Moore, who plays center on the second, got me around the neck twice and tried to pull my head off. If he doesn't quit that trick I'll be forced to forget my elegant manners and slug him."

"And he'll wipe the turf up with you, and I hope he does," said Dave, rubbing his nose ruefully.

"And the St. Eustace game only two weeks off," continued Paddy, heedless of the interruption. "We're in an awful state, fellows. I wish we had Remsen back to coach us. Gardiner's all right in his way, but he doesn't begin to know the football that Stephen Remsen does. We're goners this year for sure."

"Oh, cheer up," answered Don. "You can do lots in two weeks. Look at the material we've got."

"Yes, look at it," said Paddy. "There isn't a man in the line or back of it that's played in a big game except Greene and myself."

"But St. Eustace has a lot of new men this year, too."

"Don't you believe it, my boy. That's what they say, but Gardiner told me yesterday that St. Eustace has five fellows on the team that played against us last year."

"Does the game come off here?" asked Wayne.

"No, it's at Marshall this year. We're all going down, aren't we, fellows?" asked Dave.

"Of course," answered Don. "We will go and see Paddy slaughtered. Wayne will go along and we'll teach him to sing 'Hilltonians.' By the way, I've been trying to persuade him that he ought to take up training for the track team. He will make a first-class runner. But he's so terribly lazy and indifferent that it's like talking to a football dummy."

"Of course you ought to, Wayne," exclaimed Paddy earnestly. "It's your duty, my young friend. Every fellow ought to do everything he can for the success of the school. I'd try for the team if I could run any faster than I can walk."

"Oh, well," said Wayne, "I'll see about it."

"You ought to jump at the chance," said Dave, in disgust. "It isn't every chap that gets asked by the captain of the team. And, let me tell you— Hello! Six o'clock, fellows. Who's for supper?"

"Every one," cried Don, jumping up. "But I've got to wash first. Some one light the gas if they can find the matches."

"Well, I'm off," said Paddy.

"So'm I," echoed Dave. "I say, Don, I'm coming over after supper to see if you can help me with that trigonometry stuff."

"All right," answered Don from the bedroom between splashes. "If you know less about it than I do I'll be surprised."

"Come on," cried Paddy impatiently from the doorway—

"'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To eat of many things;
Of apple sauce and gingerbread,
Of cake and red her*rings!*'"

CHAPTER IV

THE REVOLT BEGINS

Wayne lounged down the steps of the Academy Building, a little bundle of books under his arm, and listlessly crossed the grass to the wall that guarded the river bluff, from where an enticing panorama of stream and meadow and distant mountains lay before him. The day was one of those unseasonably warm ones which sometimes creep unexpectedly into the month of November, and which make every task doubly hard and any sort of idleness attractive. The river was intensely blue, the sky almost cloudless, and the afternoon sun shone with mellow warmth on the deep red bricks of the ancient buildings.

Wayne tossed his books on the sod and perched himself on the top of the wall. The last recitation of the day was over and he was at a loss for something to do. To be sure, he might, in fact ought to study; but study didn't appeal to him. Now and then he turned his head toward the building in hope of seeing some fellow who could be induced to come and talk with him. Don was doing laboratory work in physics and Dave and Paddy were undoubt-

edly on the campus. At a little distance a couple of boys whom Wayne did not know were passing a football back and forth as they loitered along the path. A boy whom he did know ran down the steps and shouted a salutation to him, but Wayne only waved his hand in reply. It was Ferguson, who talked of nothing but postage stamps, and Wayne had outgrown stamps and found no interest in discussing them. Ferguson went on around the corner of Academy Building toward the gymnasium, and with a start Wayne recollected that at that moment he should be making one of a squad of upper middle-class fellows and exercising with the chest weights. He looked doubtfully toward the point where Ferguson had disappeared. What right, he asked himself, had a preparatory school, where a fellow goes to learn Greek and Latin and mathematics, and such things, to insist that a fellow shall develop his muscles with chest weights and dumb-bells and single sticks? None at all; the whole thing was manifestly unjust. Schools were to make scholars and not athletes, said Wayne, and he, for one, stood ready to protest, to the principal himself if need be, against the mistaken system.

The moment for such protest must be drawing near, thought the boy, with something between a grin and a scowl, for he had already twice absented himself from gymnasium work, and only yesterday a polite but firm note from Professor Beck had reminded him of the fact. Well, he was in for it now, and he might as well be hung for a

sheep as a lamb. He gathered his books together and started along the river path toward the campus in search of Paddy or Dave. He wanted to tell some one about it.

Wayne had been at Hillton two months, and was apparently no nearer being reconciled to the discipline and spirit of the Academy than on the day he entered. He found the studies many and difficult and the rules onerous. Everything was so different from what he had been accustomed to. At home he had attended a small private school where laxity of discipline and indifference to study occasioned but scant comment. The dozen or so scholars studied practically what they pleased and when they pleased, which in many cases was very little. Wayne's mother had died when he was five years of age; his father, who had labored conscientiously at the boy's upbringing, had erred on the side of leniency. Wayne had been given most everything for which he had asked, including his own way on many occasions when a denial would have worked better results. A boy with less inherent manliness might have been spoiled beyond repair. Wayne was—well, perhaps half spoiled; at all events unfitted for his sudden transition to a school like Hillton, where every boy was thrown entirely on his own resources and was judged by his individual accomplishments.

Wayne envied Don and Paddy, and even Dave, their ability to conquer lessons with apparent ease. He was not lazy, but was lacking in a very valuable thing called appli-

cation, which is sometimes better than brains. And where Don mastered a lesson in thirty minutes Wayne spent twice that time on a like task. It had required two months of the hardest coaching to fit Wayne for admission into the upper middle class at the Academy, and now he was making a sad muddle of his studies and was beginning to get discouraged. He wished his father hadn't sent him to Hillton; or, rather, he would wish that were it not for Don—and Paddy—and Dave—and, yes, for lots of other things. Wayne sighed as he thought of what a jolly place the Academy would be if it wasn't for lessons—and chest weights! And this brought him back to his grievance, and, having reached the campus, he looked about to find some one to whom he might confide his perplexities and resolves.

But both Paddy and Dave were too busy to heed any one else's troubles. Paddy, in a disreputable suit of football togs, his face streaming with perspiration, was being pushed and shoved about the gridiron, the center of a writhing mass of players, while the coach's whistle vainly proclaimed the ball not in play. Dave, his good-natured face red with exertion, was struggling with his beloved hammer amid a little circle of attentive and facetious spectators.

"Say, Dave, you ought to stop, really you had," one of the onlookers was saying as Wayne joined the circle. "If you keep at it much longer you won't be able to throw that thing out of the circle."

"Three feet four inches short of the first mark," said

a youth with a tape as he rose from measuring the last flight of the weight. "Better rest a bit."

"Why don't you take the hammer off, Dave, and throw the handle?" asked a third boy.

"Well, I wish you'd step up here and have a try at it," answered Dave good-naturedly.

"Oh, but I'm not a strong man like you. If I was half as big I'd throw the old thing twice as far as that."

"Well, perhaps you'll grow in time, Tommy. Hello, Wayne," he continued, as he caught sight of that youth, "why don't you say something funny? I don't mind; go on."

"Can't think of anything right now," answered Wayne. "The funniest thing I know of is tossing an iron ball around when it's too warm to move. You look like a roast of beef, Dave."

"Do I? Well, I've been roasted enough; I'm going to knock off. Besides, I'm in poor form to-day. Let's go over and watch Paddy, poor dub. I guess he's having a hard time of it, too."

Dave picked up his sweater and hammer and the two strolled over to the side-line and sat down. The first and second elevens, the latter augmented by several extra players, were putting in a hard practice. Less than a fortnight remained ere the game of the season would be played with St. Eustace Academy, and hard work was the order of the day. The head coach, an old Hillton graduate named Gar

diner, was far from satisfied with the team's showing. As Paddy had pointed out, he and Greene were the only members of the first eleven who had the experience that participation in a big game brings. Greene was the captain and played right end, and to-day he was visibly worried and nervous, and was rapidly working his men into much the same state when Gardiner called time and allowed the almost breathless players to strew themselves over the field on their backs and pant away to their heart's content. Paddy caught sight of the two boys on the side-line and crawled dejectedly over to them on all fours, his tongue hanging out, in ludicrous imitation of a dog.

"It's awful, my brethren, simply awful. We are probably the worst lot of football players in the world. Greene will tell you so—and glad of the chance, bad luck to him! He's got the 'springums.'"

"What are those?" asked Wayne.

"Oh, those are nerves; when you can't keep still, you know. That's what's the matter with Greene to-day. And I don't much blame him; the weather's unfit for practice, and every chap on the team feels like a sausage, and the St. Eustace game's a week from Thursday. I heard March tell Gardiner——"

"Is Joel March here?" asked Dave.

"Yes; see him over there talking to 'Pigeon' Wallace? He said to Gardiner a few minutes ago, 'There's one great trouble with that eleven, Mr. Gardiner, and that

is that it's not the kind that wins.' He didn't know I could hear. Of course I wouldn't tell Greene for a house and farm. But March is right; I've felt that way all the fall. And if March says we can't win, we're not going to." Paddy sighed dolefully.

"Tommyrot, Paddy!" answered Dave. "Joel March isn't infallible, and the team may take a big brace before Thanksgiving."

"Who's Joel March, anyway?" asked Wayne.

"Joel March? Why, Joel March is—is— Say, haven't you ever heard of March?" exclaimed Dave, in deep disgust. Wayne shook his head.

"I reckon not; if I have I've forgotten it. What did he do—run a mile in eighteen and three-fourth seconds or throw an iron ball over Academy Building?"

"Neither, my sarcastic and ignorant young friend from the Sunny South," answered Paddy, with asperity. "But he's the finest half-back in college; and if you knew anything about the important affairs of the day you would know that he made the only score in the Harwell-Pennsylvania game last Saturday, and that he ran over fifty-five yards to do it! Also, and likewise, and moreover," continued Paddy, with great severity, "when I was a little green junior, two years ago, I sat just about here and watched Joel March kick a goal from the field that tied the St. Eustace game after they had us beaten. And I yelled myself hoarse and couldn't speak loud enough at

linner to ask for the turkey, and Dave ate my share before my eyes! That's who Joel March is."

"You don't say," responded Wayne, without displaying the least bit of awe. "And who's the swell with him?"

"That's West, his chum. West is the father of golf here at Hillton," answered Dave, with becoming reverence. "I used to follow him when he went around and wish that I could drive the way he could. He was a member of the team that Harwell sent to the intercollegiate tournament last month. Is March going to coach the backs, Paddy?"

"Don't know; but they could stand it. There's going to be a shake-up next half, I'll bet. Gardiner says if the second scores on us again before Thanksgiving he'll send it to Marshall instead of the first. Gardiner's a great jollier. Here we go again like lambs to the slaughter," added Paddy as the whistle blew.

"You remind me of a lamb," said Dave; "you're so different."

Paddy playfully pommeled the other's ribs and then cantered off to the center of the gridiron, where Gardiner, Greene, and March, the old Hillton half-back, were assembled in deep converse.

"Want to go back," asked Dave, "or shall we stay and see the rest of the practice?"

"Let's stay," said Wayne. "I suppose Paddy is sure of his place, isn't he? I mean they won't put him off, will they?"

"No; I guess Paddy's all right for center. But the big chap next to him, at left-guard, is sure to go on the second, I think. They ought to have made Paddy captain last fall. Greene's an awfully decent fellow, but he's liable to get what Paddy calls the 'springums.' He's too high-strung for the place. Watch Gardiner now; he's doing things."

The head coach was a big, broad-shouldered man, with a face so freckled and homely as to be attractive. Many years before he had been a guard on the Hillton eleven and his name stood high on the Academy's roll of honor. As Dave had said, he was "doing things." Four of the first eleven players were relegated in disgrace to the ranks of the second, their positions being filled by so many happy youths from the opposing team. Wayne noted with satisfaction that Paddy's broad bulk still remained in the center of the first eleven's line when the two teams faced each other for the last twenty minutes of play. Joel March, with coat and vest discarded, took up a position behind quarter-back and from there coached the two halfs with much hand-clapping and many cheery commands. Greene appeared to have recovered his equanimity, and the first eleven successfully withstood the onslaught of the opponents until the ball went to Paddy and a spirited advance down the field brought the pigskin to the second's forty-yard line and gave Grow, the full-back, an opportunity to try a goal from a placement. The attempt failed and the ball went

back to the second, but the first's line again held well, and a kick up the field sent the players scurrying to the thirty-five-yard line, where, coached by March, Grow secured the ball and recovered ten yards ere he was downed. Later the first worked the ball over for a touch-down, from which no goal was tried, and the practice game ended without the dreaded scoring by the second eleven, much to Paddy's relief.

The three boys hurried back together, and Wayne, parting from his companions at the gymnasium, sought his room, reflecting on the athletic mania that seemed to possess every fellow at the school.

"I'll have to do something that way myself," he thought ruefully, "or I'll be a sort of—what-yer-call-it?—social outcast."

Then he recollected that he had forgotten to consult Dave regarding his proposed declaration of right, and was rather glad that he had; because, after all, he told himself, Dave Merton was not a chap that would sympathize with a protest against gymnastics and such things. But that evening, as the two sat studying in their room after supper, Wayne told his plans to Don and asked for an opinion. And Don looked up from his Greek text-book and said briefly and succinctly:

"Don't do it!"

"But, I say, Don, I've got some voice in the business, haven't I? What right has Professor Beck or Professor

Wheeler or—or any of them got to make me develop my muscles if I don't want my muscles developed? When it comes to study, you know, why, that's another——"

"Well, if you'll take my advice you'll stop worrying about your rights and obey the rules."

"But——"

"Because if you don't, Wayne, you'd much better have stayed at home. I—I tried asserting my rights once and it didn't pay. And since then I've tended to my own affairs and let the faculty make the laws."

"Just the same," answered Wayne, with immense dignity, "I don't intend to put up with injustice, although you may. I shall tell Professor Wheeler just what I've told you, and——"

Don looked up from his book with a frown.

"Wayne, *will* you shut up?"

"But I'm telling you——"

"But I don't want to hear. It's all nonsense. And, besides, if you're going to say it all to 'Wheels' what's the good of boring me with it? Talk about injustice," groaned Don, "look at the length of this lesson!"

Wayne opened his book and, as a silent protest against his friend's heartlessness, began to study.

CHAPTER V

PRINCIPAL AND PRINCIPLES

WAYNE'S opportunity to protest came earlier than he expected. When he entered Bradley Hall in the middle of the forenoon to get his French grammar he found an official-looking note in the mail box. It proved to be from the principal and requested Wayne's presence at the office at noon. The latter made hard work of the French recitation, and took no interest in the doings of Bonaparte in Egypt for thinking of the approaching interview and strengthening the arguments which were to confuse the principal and put the iniquitous school law to rout.

He found the principal's secretary and two pupils, who assisted in the work, occupying the outer office. Professor Wheeler was engaged, but would see him in a moment. Wayne took a chair, resenting the delay which required him to nurse the state of virtuous indignation into which he had worked himself. The quiet of the room, disturbed only by the scratching of the pens or the rustling of paper, presently exerted a depressing effect, and he felt his courage oozing out of him. Then the secretary arose and went into the

inner room. When he returned a moment later he left the door ajar and Wayne caught a glimpse of a warm-toned apartment, a portion of a high bookcase, and the corner of a broad mahogany desk. From within came a slight shuffling of uneasy feet and the noise of a turned page. Then came the sound of a closing book, and a voice, which Wayne recognized as belonging to the principal, broke the silence:

"Now, my boy, I'll speak with you. What is your name?"

"Carl Gray, sir," answered a very boyish voice.

"Ah, yes; you're in the lower middle class?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have received a complaint from Porter, in the village. He informs me that you have owed him a bill since last term and that he can not get his money. Is that true?"

"Yes, sir" The boy spoke in low tones, and Wayne, without seeing him, knew the state of trepidation he was in and wondered if he would behave so cravenly when his turn came.

"You knew the rule about such things?" asked the principal. "You knew that pupils are not allowed to contract debts?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then why did you do it, Gray?"

"I—I wanted some things, and so— Porter said that he would trust me——"

"Let me see. You played on one of the nines last spring, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir; on the junior class nine."

"Yes. Well, Gray, when you knock a good clean base hit what do you do? Do you run over toward the grand stand and then back toward the pitcher's box and so on to first base, or do you go there as directly and as speedily as you know how?" A moment of silence followed and Wayne grinned.

"Directly, sir," said the boy inside finally.

"Yes, I should think so. Well, now, when you start to make an explanation apply the same rule, my lad: go just as directly and quickly as you can to the point. As a matter of fact, you knew that you were disobeying the rules of the Academy, and preferred to do that than to go without some things that you wanted. Isn't that so?"

"I— No, sir, I didn't——"

"That isn't just the way you would put it, Gray, but isn't it correct?"

"Yes, sir, I suppose so."

"Do you have an allowance, Gray?"

"Yes, sir; fifty cents a week."

"But you don't find it large enough?"

"I wanted some baseball things and some clothes. We had to have uniforms."

"I see. Did you think when you had the things charged to you that you could pay for them?"

"Yes, sir. I meant to pay a quarter every week, but somehow, sir——"

"The quarter wasn't there when you wanted it; I see. Well, Porter must be paid. He is not blameless in the affair; he knew what the rule is about giving credit to the pupils, and I shall see that he gets no more of the school trade. But that doesn't alter the fact that you owe him the sum of twelve dollars. Can you pay it?"

"No, sir, not right away. I will pay him fifty cents a week. I offered to do so a week ago and he said he must have the whole amount, and I was saving it up."

"H'm! How much have you saved?"

"A—a dollar."

"Slow work, Gray. Now, I shall settle this bill and send the account to your parents. Have you anything to say about that?"

"Oh, sir, please don't! I'll pay it as soon as I can, sir; I will give him every cent I get. Only please don't send it home!"

"Your family is not well off, Gray?"

"No, sir. I have only a mother, and she couldn't pay it without—without missing the money dreadfully, sir. If only you will not let her know!"

"You should have thought of that before, Gray. I should like to spare your mother as much, perhaps, as you; but the rules are strict and I can't see my way to making an exception in your case. I shall have to send the bill to

your mother, sir. Let it teach you a lesson. There are lots of things in this world, Gray, that we think we must have, but which we can do very well without if only we realize it. It is hard sometimes to see others possess things that we want and can not have. But luckily the world doesn't judge us by our possessions, but by our accomplishments. I don't believe that the football clothes which you got from Porter enabled you to play better ball or stand better in your class, and it's very unlikely that any of the boys thought you a finer fellow for having them. In future live within your income—that is, your allowance—and if you want to pay off the debt save your money instead of spending it, and when the amount is saved return it to your mother. That would be an honest and a manly act. That is all I have to say to you, my boy."

"I will, sir," answered the culprit earnestly. "But won't you—couldn't you please, sir, not send——"

"That can't be altered, Gray," answered the principal kindly. "I am sorry. Good day."

A slender and very white-faced boy passed out with averted eyes, and a moment later Wayne found himself in the inner office. The principal was leaning back in his big armchair thoughtfully polishing his glasses. He did not look up at once, and Wayne had an opportunity to study the man who for over twenty years had wisely directed the affairs of one of the largest preparatory schools of the country, and who in that time had gained the reverence and

affection of thousands of boys. Wayne saw a middle-aged, scholarly looking man, whose brown hair was but lightly frosted about the temples, and whose upright and vigorous figure indicated the possession of much physical strength. There was an almost youthful set to the broad shoulders, and Wayne was certain that the muscles won years before in his college crew were still firm and strong. Indeed, those muscles, although Wayne did not know it, were kept in perfect condition by as much bodily exercise as the principal could crowd into a busy life, and his prowess with a golf club was a matter of pride and admiration among the boys. There was a kindly look in the brown eyes that were presently turned upon the waiting lad.

"Are you Wayne Gordon?"

"Yes, sir."

"You're in the upper middle, aren't you, and this is your first year at Hillton?"

Wayne again assented.

"And I dare say you are not perfectly acquainted with the rules of the Academy yet; I can understand that. It takes some time to learn them, even though we try not to have very many. Professor Beck tells me, Gordon, that you have been absent on three occasions from gymnasium work and have failed to make any excuse. I presume you had some very good reason for not attending on each occasion, did you not?" The tone and manner were so kindly that Wayne found himself wishing that he had some pre-

sentable excuse; but in the next moment he remembered his purpose and answered uncompromisingly:

"I stayed away on three days, sir, because it was not convenient to attend. I don't consider that you—I mean the faculty—has any right to compel a fellow to—to do gymnasium work unless he wishes to."

"Indeed!" was the quiet reply. "And how do you arrive at that conclusion?"

Whereupon Wayne very earnestly and at much length presented his views on the subject, maintaining a respectful but undoubtedly rather irritating tone of complacency. Once or twice the listener frowned, once he smiled, as though in spite of himself, at some high-sounding phrase from the boy. When Wayne had finished, a little breathless, the principal spoke:

"Are you a member of the debating club, Gordon?"

"No, sir," answered Wayne, surprised into an expression of ordinary curiosity quite unbecoming a great reformer.

"You should join. I think you have the making of a very lucid and convincing speaker." The boy strove to detect an expression of irony on the master's face, but saw none. "Unfortunately, in the present case you have selected a side in the debate that is not defensible. And, also unfortunately, I have neither the time nor the inclination to enter the lists with you. But I will say one or two things on the subject. In the first place, it is a waste

of your time to consider whether or not the faculty has the right to make the rule regarding physical training; the indisputable fact is that the faculty has made the rule. For the sake of argument—although I said I would not argue—let us assume that the faculty has not the right. What can you do about it? The rules are not altered, after ten years, on the demand of one scholar out of a school of some two hundred. If the pupil stands firm and the faculty stands firm what is going to be the result? Why, the two must part company. In other words, the pupil must leave. Do you think it is worth it?"

"But it's wrong, sir, and if I accept the—the arrangement I am indorsing it, and I can't do that."

"But maybe it isn't wrong; we only assumed it to be, you remember. You don't care for athletics?"

"Not much, sir; I like riding and shooting and fishing, but I don't see the good of fussing—I mean exercising—with dumb-bells and chest weights and single sticks; and it tires me so that I can't do my lessons well." The principal raised his eyebrows in genuine astonishment.

"Are you certain of that? Maybe you have not given the thing a fair trial. We believe here at Hillton that it is just as necessary to keep a boy's health good as his morals, and our plan has worked admirably for many years. The rule regarding 'compulsory physical education,' as you call it, is not peculiar to Hillton; it is to be found at every preparatory school in the country, I feel sure. A capability

for good studying depends on a clear brain and a well body, and these, in turn, depend on a proper attention to exercise and recreation. The first of these we demand; the other we encourage and expect. Who is your roommate?"

"Donald Cunningham, sir."

"Indeed! And does he have very much trouble with his studies?"

"No, sir; but he has been at it for two years—the gymnasium work, I mean. I'm not used to it, and I find the studies difficult, and if I am tired I can't do them."

"If gymnasium work tires you it is undoubtedly because you have not had enough of it. And it shows that you need it. Professor Beck is very careful to require no more in that direction from a boy than his condition should allow, and to render mistakes impossible the physical examination of every pupil is made when he enters, and again at intervals until he leaves school. Now, I will speak to Professor Beck; maybe it will seem advisable to him to make your exercise a little lighter for a while. But I expect you to report regularly at the gymnasium, or, if you are feeling unfit, to tell me of the fact. We won't require any boy to do anything that might be of injury to him. Will you promise to do this?"

"I can't, sir. It is the principle of the thing that is wrong."

"I can't discuss that with you any longer, Gordon; I've done so at greater length than I intended to already. You

must obey the rules while you are here. If you do not you must go elsewhere. When is your next gymnasium day?"

"To-morrow, sir."

"Very well; I shall expect you to be there. If you are not I shall be obliged to put you on probation, which is a very uncomfortable thing. If you still refuse you will be suspended. I tell you this now so that you may labor under no illusions. I do not complain because you hold the views which you do—they are surprising, but not against discipline—but I must and do insist that you obey the rules. Think it over, Gordon, and don't do yourself an injury by taking the wrong course. If you want to see me in the morning, after you have slept on the matter, you will find me here. Good day."

"Good day, sir, and thank you for your advice; only——"

"Well?"

"I don't think I can do as you wish."

"But," answered the principal earnestly, "let us hope that you can."

CHAPTER VI

WAYNE PAYS A BILL

"I WANT two dollars, Don."

Don glanced up with a smile.

"So do I; I was thinking so just this morning. I need a new pair of gymnasium shoes, and— But please, Wayne, come in and shut the door; there's a regular cyclone blowing around my feet."

"But, look here. I want to borrow two dollars from you, Don; I must have it right away," said Wayne peremptorily, as he shut out the draught.

"Sorry, because I haven't got fifty cents to my name, and won't have until Monday. What do you want to do with it? Going to start a bank?"

"That's none of your business," answered Wayne; "and if you can't lend it to me I can't stop chinning here I'll try Paddy, I guess."

"Paddy!" exclaimed Don, with a grin. "Why, Paddy never has a nickel ten minutes after his dad sends him his allowance, which is the first. If he had I'd be after him this minute; he's owed me eighty cents ever since

September. Dave might have it. Have you had dinner? Where did you go to?"

"Dinner? No, I forgot about it. What time is it? Am I too late?"

"Of course; it's twenty after two. What have you been doing?"

"Oh, I've—" Wayne's face grew cloudy as he jumped off the end of the table and went to the door. "I'll tell you about it later. I'm busy now. Has Dave got a recitation on?"

"What's to-day—Thursday? I'm sure I don't know. I never can keep track of his hours; seniors are such an erratic, self-important lot."

"Well, I'll run over and see. Er—by the way, do you know a chap called Gray, a rather pasty-looking lower middle fellow?"

"Gray? No, I don't think so. What does he do?"

"Do? Oh, I think he's a baseball player, or something like that."

"Don't remember him. Are you coming up here after four?"

"Yep; wait for me."

Wayne clattered off downstairs and crossed the green back of the gymnasium and the principal's residence. As he went he drew a little roll of money from his vest, supplemented it with a few coins from his trousers' pocket,

and counted the whole over twice. He shook his head as he put the money away again.

"Nine dollars and forty-two cents," he muttered, "and I can't make any more of it if I count it all day."

He ran up the steps to Hampton House, pushed open the broad, white door and entered the big colonial hallway. At the far end a cheerful fire was cracking in a generous chimney place, lighting up the dim gilt frames and dull canvases of the portraits of bygone Hilltonians that looked severely down from the walls. Hampton House is a dormitory whose half dozen rooms are inhabited by a few wealthy youths who find in the comfort of the great, old-fashioned apartments and the prestige that residence therein brings compensation for the high rents. Wayne turned sharply to the right and beat a tattoo with his knuckles over the black figure 2 on the door. From within came the sound of a loud voice in monotonous declamation. Wayne substituted his shoe for his knuckles and Paddy's voice bade him enter.

"Where's Dave?" asked Wayne. Paddy, who had been tramping up and down the apartment with a book in his hand, and declaiming pages of Cæsar's Civil War to the chandelier, tossed the volume aside and tried to smooth down his hair, which was standing up in tumbled heaps, making him look not unlike "the fretful porcupine."

"Dave's at a recitation; German, I think. Want to to see him?"

"Yes, I want to borrow some money from him."

"Don't think he has any. You see, I borrow most of his money as soon as it comes; he never has any use for it himself, and it grieves me to see it laying round idle. How much do you want?"

"Two dollars. Have you got it, Paddy?"

"'Fraid not; let's see." He pulled open a table drawer and rummaged about until several pieces of silver rewarded his search. Then he emptied his pockets, and the two counted the result.

"Eighty-five cents," said Paddy regretfully. "Hold on; perhaps Dave has some change left. Sometimes I leave him a few cents for pocket money." He went to his chum's bureau and in a moment returned with a purse which, when turned up over the study table, rained from its depths four quarters and a nickel.

"Oh, the desavin critter!" cried Paddy. "Now, where did he get all that wealth? Let's see; that's one dollar and ninety cents. If we could only find another dime——"

"That'll do," answered Wayne, as he pocketed the coins. "I'll write home to-night and pay you back as soon as I get it. I'm awfully much obliged."

"Don't mention it. Is there anything else I can do for you to-day?"

"Have you got anything to eat? I lost my dinner; forgot it until a minute ago."

"I've got some crackers," replied Paddy dubiously, "and a tin of some kind of meat. It's been opened a good while, but I guess it'll be all right after I scrape the mold off."

"Bring them out, will you? I'm in a hurry, Paddy I've got a recitation at 3.15." Paddy whistled.

"In a hurry! Whisper, Wayne, are yez ill?"

"Shut up. Where's the meat?"

The delicacies were produced and Wayne ate ravenously. As Paddy had predicted, the tinned beef was extremely palatable to the hungry boy after a half inch of mold had been detached with the paper cutter.

"Do you know a chap named Gray?" asked Wayne, with his mouth full of cracker.

"Aisy, me boy!" cried Paddy. "Don't choke yersilf. Wait till your tongue has more room. Gray, did you say? I know a youngster by that name in the lower middle. He played ball on the junior nine last year when they beat us by one run in twelve innings."

"That's the fellow. Where does he room?"

"I don't know, but I'll soon tell you." Paddy found a school catalogue and turned the leaves. "Here we are: Gray, Carl Ellis, Buffalo, N. Y., W. H. Vance's."

"Whereabouts is Vance's?" asked Wayne, as he scraped the bottom of the can.

"Just around the corner from the post office; a big,

square, white house with green blinds and a cat-colored roof."

"A what?"

"Cat-colored roof—kind of a Maltese color, you know."

"Well, I'm off. Thanks for the stuff! Tell Dave——"

"Hold on and I'll go with you. What's up?"

"No, you won't; I'm going alone. I'll tell you about it later—perhaps."

"Well, if it's a lark, you're mighty mean not to let a chap into it."

"It isn't a lark at all. By!"

Wayne hurried out and Paddy grumblingly closed the door and watched him from the window.

"He's mighty secret-like, I'm thinking, and mighty hurried. I haven't seen him move so fast since he came. Must be something important. Wish I knew, bad cess to him!"

Wayne trudged off up the village road and soon found the boarding house with the "cat-colored roof." Gray's name adorned a door on the second floor, and Wayne's knock elicited, after a moment, a faint "Come in!" The room was a cheerful one with four big windows, but the furnishings were tattered and worn and the walls were almost bare of pictures. The floor was partly covered by a threadbare ingrain rug and the green leather on the stu-

dent desk in the center was full of holes and spots. The boy whom Wayne had seen in the principal's office arose from a chair at the desk as Wayne entered, and a half-written letter before him told its own story. Gray's eyes were suspiciously red and the lad looked embarrassed and ill at ease. Wayne, with a sudden recollection of Professor Wheeler's advice, plunged at once into the subject of his visit.

"You're Carl Gray, aren't you? Well, my name's Gordon; I'm in the upper middle. I happened to be in Wheeler's outer office when you were in there. The door was partly open and I couldn't help hearing what was said, and—and I'm awfully sorry, of course. But you see it wasn't my fault."

"I'm sorry you heard it," answered Gray, looking piteously embarrassed; "but of course you—it wasn't your fault."

"No—was it?" asked Wayne eagerly. "So I thought that perhaps I could help you, and—" He stepped forward and placed the money on the table. "There's eleven dollars there. I couldn't get hold of any more, but you said you had a dollar, you know, so perhaps that'll be enough." Gray looked helplessly from Wayne to the money and back again. Once he opened his mouth, but, as he apparently could find no words, Wayne went on: "I haven't a mother myself, you see—she died when I was just a youngster — but if I had I'd feel as you do

about the bill; and of course Professor Wheeler won't send it to her if you pay this money to Porter to-day and tell him about it."

"But I don't see why—why you should lend me this," said Gray, at length. "You don't know me and—and I can't pay you for a good while. I don't get much of an allowance, and——"

"I know," replied Wayne cheerfully. "Fifty cents a week. But pay me back when you can; I'm in no hurry. And—and you might come and see me sometime; I room in Bradley—No. 15."

"I'll pay you fifty cents every week until it's all returned!" cried Gray. "Why, I'd have done—done anything to keep mother from knowing about it and having to pay it! I was such a fool, wasn't I? Bought clothes and gloves and lots of things that I didn't need just because Porter said I could charge them and that he wouldn't ask for the money until I could pay it."

"He ought to be kicked!" exclaimed Wayne angrily.

"He didn't act decently," continued Gray. "If he'd only told me last year I could have had it almost paid by now; but I thought there was no hurry, and—and—" He stopped and dropped his gaze; then he went on in lowered tones: "I wish I could make you understand how glad I am and how much I thank you——"

"Oh, dry up!" said Wayne, backing toward the door and searching with his hand for the knob. "It's all right,

and I understand. And—well, I must hurry—got a recitation, you know—may be late now."

He had found the knob and the last words were spoken from the hallway.

"But, I say, Gray, I wish you wouldn't try to pay fifty cents a week to me. I don't need it, you know, and it's all your allowance, and——"

"I think I'd rather, if you don't mind," answered the younger lad resolutely. He was smiling now and looked quite healthy and happy; but something was glittering in the corner of his eye, and Wayne seeing it, bolted downstairs three steps at a time.

After Wayne left Hampton House Paddy went dejectedly back to his Latin, but at the end of twenty minutes found that he had remembered nothing of what he had gone over, and so tossed his book aside, yawned, glanced at the clock, and sallied forth in the direction of Academy Building. As he turned the corner he caught sight of Don coming down the steps and gained that youth's attention by a war whoop. Don was looking unusually thoughtful as Paddy overtook him.

"Why, you look serious enough to have been visiting 'Wheels'!" cried Paddy.

"That's what I've been doing."

"What—you? What's the trouble?"

"I'll tell you. It's Wayne. He won't attend gym work and he's told 'Wheels' as much, and 'Wheels' has

threatened to put him on probation if he doesn't report to Beck to-morrow."

"But——"

"'Wheels' sent for me and asked me to use my persuasive powers on the silly dub. But what can I do? Wayne's as stubborn as a mule, and he declares he won't attend; says it's an injustice—that faculty hasn't any right to compel him to do gym work unless he wants to."

"Do you mean that he told all that rot to 'Wheels'?"

"Every word, and a lot more, I guess." Paddy whistled.

"Well, he is a chump. Where is he? He came over and borrowed some money awhile ago. What's he up to now?"

"Don't ask me," responded Don helplessly. "What I want to know is, how can we keep the fellow from being put on probation or suspended, for 'Wheels' declares he'll do both?"

"Why, we'll get Dave, and the three of us will reason with him."

"Pshaw! we might as well save our breath. I'd just as soon reason with a lamp-post," answered Don, in disgust.

"Hello! there he comes now," said Paddy. "He's been to the village to see some fellow by the name of Gray. Shall we walk down and try our arguments now?"

"No; let's wait. You and Dave come up to the room to-night and we'll see what we can do with him," said

Don. "I hate to have him get into trouble, because after all, he's a good chap."

"Of course he is," answered Paddy heartily, "and we'll look after him all right. Why, if he won't go and take his gym work like a little man, after we've reasoned with him, we'll——"

Paddy stopped, grinning broadly, and slapped Don triumphantly on the shoulder.

"I have it!" he cried.

"Have what?"

"A way, my lad."

"What is it?" asked Don eagerly.

"Why, if he refuses to go to gym to-morrow, we'll just— But I'll tell you later. Here he is, Hello, Old Virginia! where've you been?"

"Oh, just to the village," answered Wayne vaguely.

"And did you spend all that money?"

"Every cent of it."

"Well, pony up. Where are the goodies?" demanded Paddy.

"Why, I—well, the fact is——"

"Cut it out. What did you buy?"

"Nothing. Fact is I—I paid a bill."

CHAPTER VII

THE REVOLT ENDS

The sun came up from behind Mount Adam, the chapel bell rang, some two hundred boys leaped, crawled, or rolled out of bed, and life at Hillton began the next morning as though the day was of no more importance than any of the five which had preceded it that week; in fact, as though Wayne Gordon was not heroically resolved to sacrifice himself upon the altar of principle.

While the unfeeling sun was coming up Wayne was going through a most remarkable adventure. Plainly he had won Professor Wheeler to his side, for together they were besieged in the school library and had barricaded the doors and windows with books, while from convenient loopholes they maintained a rapid and merciless fusillade of ancient and modern history, Greek and Latin text-books, geometries, and algebras upon the heads of the besiegers, who retaliated with chest weights, dumb-bells, single sticks, and Indian clubs until the air was dark with the flying missles and the battle cries of the foes shook the building. Wayne and the principal had just clasped

hands and sworn to perish side by side, fighting grandly to the last gasp for the right, when a whole covey of chest weights came through a window and smote Wayne on the head, and he awoke to see Don with a second pillow poised, ready to throw.

"Get up, Wayne; bell's rung!"

Wayne yawned, pitched the pillow back at Don, and arose. He hadn't slept well, and wished that Don wouldn't always insist on his getting up so early. And he told him so. But Don was good nature itself that morning and refused to argue or get cross, and Wayne was perforce obliged to recover his wonted gayety, much against his inclination, and trudge off arm in arm with Don to chapel. And after he had got through with a hearty breakfast, even the thought that probation awaited him on the morrow failed to dispel his excellent spirits.

For, as Don had feared, the combined efforts of the three friends had failed to shake Wayne's resolution. Don had pleaded, Paddy had begged, Dave had threatened; and Wayne had reiterated passionately his desire to suffer martyrdom on account of his principles, and had utterly and absolutely and finally refused to attend gymnasium work to-day or to plead illness in extenuation. The three friends had not appeared cast down — a fact at which Wayne wondered not a little. It looked as though they didn't care whether he was put on probation or not, and

he had gone to bed deeply pessimistic on the subject of friendship.

Wayne's hour for physical training in the gymnasium began at three, and when, five minutes before that time, he issued from Academy Building resolved to proceed to his room and put in the momentous hour at hard study, he found Don and Dave and Paddy on the steps. The two latter youths at once locked arms with him, much to his surprise, for Dave especially was little given to such expressions of friendliness, and the quartet moved toward Bradley Hall.

"Why aren't you and Dave on the campus?" asked Wayne.

"Oh, we didn't like to leave you alone this afternoon," answered Paddy, with a smile. "You see, we have your welfare at heart, my boy, and we are going to see that you don't act silly and get put on probation, and not be able to go to Marshall with us next week."

"If you mean not going to the gymnasium when you say 'acting silly,'" replied Wayne, with much dignity, "why, then, I'm going to act silly."

"Oh, no, you're not," said Dave.

"What do you mean?" demanded Wayne, striving to withdraw himself from his friends' clutches. They had almost reached the steps of Bradley, and now they stopped and faced about.

"Just this," said Dave. "We've tried persuasion and —and——"

"Entreaty," prompted Don.

"And entreaty—and both have failed. So now we're going to use force. If you don't agree to go to the gym and do your work peaceable, we are going to take you there."

Wayne struggled violently, only to suddenly find his feet off the ground, his arms held fast, and himself being borne, kicking wildly, toward the gymnasium.

"Let me go, Dave! Paddy, you—you beast, put me down!"

"Aisy, me child," answered Paddy soothingly. "'Tis for yer own good."

"Don, make 'em let me go!" pleaded Wayne. But his chum shook his head.

"Go you must, Wayne, so you'd better promise and we'll let you walk." Wayne made no answer, only struggled the harder.

"You'll have to take his legs, Don," panted Paddy. "'Tis mighty unaisy he is." They were crossing the green now, and several fellows were hurrying nearer to see what was going on. A group of boys on the steps of the gymnasium were watching.

"It's—it's an outrage!" panted Wayne, his face white with anger.

"Maybe it is," said Dave calmly, "but we're getting

you there." Struggle was useless, and Wayne for a moment lay quiet in the grasp of the three boys. Then he caught sight of the watchers. It was public degradation! He temporized.

"I'll walk, fellows," he said.

His bearers stopped and let him down.

"Will you promise to go to the gym?" asked Don.

"Yes," growled Wayne. "But I'll not do any work, and nobody can make me!"

"Up with him!" cried Dave, and once more Wayne was fighting in the arms of the three and being borne on toward the gymnasium.

"What's the fun, Paddy?" yelled one of the fellows who were hurrying to meet them.

"Oh, we're just taking exercise," answered Paddy carelessly.

"What—what are you going to do with me?" asked Wayne, in meeker tones.

"Carry you to the locker room, change your clothes, take you upstairs, and give you, like a bundle of old rags, to Professor Beck," answered Dave.

"Let me down, then, and I'll agree." Once more he found his feet, but the others took no chances and still stood guard.

"Promise to do your work?" asked Don.

"Yes," growled Wayne.

"Honest Injun?"

"Honest Injun," echoed the other.

"All right," replied Dave. "Then let's proceed."

They walked on, Wayne striving to look at ease under the inquiring gaze of many eyes as they passed up the steps and into the building. In the locker room Dave and Paddy left him to get into their own clothes and to hurry away to the campus, while Don stood by and listened patiently to all that Wayne had to say, which was much, and not altogether polite or flattering. Then the two proceeded upstairs and Wayne went through a long siege with the dumb-bells and the chest weights. Professor Beck made no sign, and Wayne wondered resentfully if he was aware of his presence. He was, for after awhile he came to the boy, watched him tugging the cords over his shoulders for a moment in silence and then said:

"Don't get yourself too tired, Gordon. Stop when you think best."

Whereat Wayne scowled, tugged the harder at the weights, and resolved to stay until the class was dismissed, hoping resentfully that he would injure his spine or some other portion of his anatomy, and that Professor Wheeler and Don and Paddy and Dave would be sorry and would regret their treatment of him. This so cheered him up that he was quite ready to forgive and forget when he had dried himself after his bath, and so met Don with almost a smile; for that youth, hoping for a reconciliation, had abandoned a French recitation and had waited patiently

outside. Neither mentioned the recent affair as they strolled off together, and by mutual consent the subject of physical training was tabooed in their conversation for several weeks. And Dave and Paddy evinced the utmost tact, and were in turn forgiven on the morrow.

Professor Wheeler, however, was not so silent on the subject nor so considerate of Wayne's feelings. He summoned the boy before him on the following day and earnestly and kindly thanked him for his action in attending the gymnasium; and Wayne, shifting uneasily from one foot to the other, heard him through and then broke out with:

"But I didn't, sir!"

"Didn't what?" asked the principal.

"Didn't voluntarily attend the class."

"But Professor Beck himself told me that you were there."

"Yes, sir, I was there; but—but—" And Wayne told the circumstances of his attendance, and the principal smiled broadly when he had finished.

"Well, well, that's one way to persuade. I asked Cunningham to see what he could do with you, but I didn't suppose he would use such—ah—heroic measures."

"I don't think it was his idea, sir," answered Wayne. "I believe Paddy was at the bottom of it."

"Paddy? Oh, yes—Breen. I shouldn't be surprised

if he was." Professor Wheeler was smiling again. "Well, it wasn't so hard yesterday, was it, Gordon?"

"No, sir, not very hard; but the principle——"

The professor held up his hands in simulated despair.

"Gordon, it's a reckless thing to say, but let us forget our principles for once. If I were you I'd try to keep out of all trouble if for no other reason than to please three such good friends as Cunningham and Breen and—er—Merton have proved to be. I'd even put principle aside, I think, and only consider that I was pleasing my chums. Now, don't you think you can afford to do that?

Wayne thoughtfully smoothed the carpet with the toe of his shoe.

"Yes, sir," he said, at length, "I think I can."

"And you'll attend the 'compulsory physical education' class in future?" Wayne scowled and tried the effect of the other shoe for a moment.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "I'll do gymnasium work, but not because I think it is right, for I don't. I still think it's wrong. But I'll do it to please Don and Dave and Paddy and—and——"

"And me," said the principal smilingly.

"Yes, sir."

"That's right. By the way, Carl Gray came to me yesterday and told me about that money, you know. It may please you to hear that the account will not be sent to his mother."

"I'm very glad, sir," responded Wayne heartily. "It seemed too bad to have her know, didn't it, sir?"

"Yes," said Professor Wheeler gravely. "I feel sure that you don't want thanks for the kindness, but I'd like to tell you that it has made me very nearly as happy as it has Gray; I disliked my duty greatly. Well, that's all, I think, Gordon. Come and see me sometimes. I'm always glad to see you boys at any time, and especially on Saturday evenings. I wish more of you could find time to come then. Oh, by the way, you said the other day that you were having hard work with your studies. Which ones bother you most?"

"Greek and mathematics are the worst."

"Perhaps you could get a little help from some one for a while. Have you tried?"

"No, sir, I—I didn't like to own up; all the other fellows get along so well."

"Not all, Gordon; there are others in your fix. Take my advice and go and see Professor Durkee. He rooms in your building. You'll find him quite willing to help you all he can; and he's an excellent Greek man. He's a little—ah—well, crusty, Gordon, on the surface, but you'll find him kindness itself underneath. Try him."

"Thank you, sir, I will."

"Yes. And it's all settled about the 'compulsory physical education,' is it?"

"Yes, sir, only——"

"What, have we struck a snag already?"

"No, only I'd like it understood that I'm doing it under protest, sir."

"That," answered the principal gravely, "is of course understood. Shall we shake hands on it?"

And they did.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOOTBALL GAME

Thanksgiving recess began the following Wednesday, to last until Friday evening, and many of the boys whose homes were near by departed by the noonday train, superciliously sympathizing with less fortunate friends whose turkey and cranberry sauce were to be eaten in the school dining hall. Paddy and Don had both received boxes of canned and sugared delicacies from home, and a supplementary feast, to follow the six o'clock repast in the hall, was arranged to take place in Paddy's room, and that youth, who was to break training after the St. Eustace game, promised himself to atone for two months of healthful diet by a veritable orgy on indigestible luxuries.

Wayne, Don, and Dave, together with more than fifty other Hilltonians, boarded the morning express and were transported to the little down-river town of Marshall, where their arrival was enthusiastically welcomed by several score of St. Eustace fellows, headed by a brass band, who escorted them twice through the village, and finally left them, to recover their breaths before lunch at the

hotel. Hillton's band was already on the ground, having accompanied the football team the evening before, and with the arrival of the wearers of the crimson a day of hard work began for it. The band's repertory was limited, but its energy tremendous, and the Marshall population gathered in front of the hotel to hearken to it and to be mercilessly guyed by the Hilltonians who thronged the broad veranda.

The game was to be called at 2.30. An hour before that time Don and Wayne—Dave having taken up with a St. Eustace acquaintance for the while—started across the bridge to the far side of the river, where, hidden almost from sight, the rival academy nestled amid its trees. The field was already bright with blue banners when the boys arrived and the St. Eustace band was busily at work.

"What I don't understand," said Wayne, "is why we don't have to pay any admission."

"That," answered Don, "is because Hillton, when she signed the athletic agreement with St. Eustace six years ago, made it one of her terms that no charge should be made for admission to any of the athletic events between the two schools. Instead, a number of invitation cards are printed. The home school gets two thirds of them for distribution and the visiting school the balance. Of course, it puts the cost of keeping up the eleven and the nine and the other teams on the fellows and the grads, but they

seem willing enough to meet it. And, besides, as I know from personal experience, it makes the captains and coaches think more about economy; and we don't very often travel in parlor cars nor put up at the swellest hotels, but we've managed to turn out a winning eleven two years out of every three for a long time."

"But other schools charge admission," objected Wayne.

"I know. St. Eustace does for every game except this one. But the idea is 'Wheels's.' He thinks that playing football or baseball for the gate receipts smacks of professionalism; 'sport for sport's sake,' says 'Wheels.' And I think he's right. Look at the big colleges; some of them make from ten to fifteen thousand dollars as their share of an important game."

"But why shouldn't they?" asked Wayne.

"Because they're not professionals; they're college fellows—the players, I mean—and have no business going around country like a lot of—of—circus folk, showing off for money. And, besides, it's bound to hurt college sport after awhile. If a captain of a big team knows that by having a winning eleven he can secure a game with another big college, and get eight or ten thousand dollars, why, in lots of cases it's going to make that captain careless about little things. He isn't going to inquire too closely into the standing of the fellows that make up the team; he's going to excuse a lot of laxity as regards training; and

he's going to overlook lots of dirty playing, and all that hurts the college in the end. No, I think 'Wheels' is right; and so does Remsen and lots of the old fellows."

"But, look here," argued Wayne. "When a team makes eight, or ten, or fifteen thousand dollars, you know, that money doesn't go to the players, does it?"

"Gracious, no!" exclaimed Don. "It's generally turned into the general athletic fund, and helps meet the expenses of the crews and other teams that don't pay their way. But don't you see that it's a big feather in a fellow's cap if he can say that he made fifteen thousand dollars for the athletic association! And the oftener a college team makes a big pot of money the richer the association gets, and the first thing you know it's sending its football and baseball teams around the country in a private car, with a small army of rubbers and coaches and a cook who prepares all the meals, just as though they were one of those foreign opera companies! It's all wrong, Wayne. It isn't good, honest sport; it's—it's tommyrot—that's what it is!"

"Well, maybe it is," answered the other boy thoughtfully. "Anyhow, I shan't kick, you know; it's saved me a dollar, I dare say."

"No, it hasn't, Wayne, because you'll have to pay that dollar, and maybe another like it, into the crew's pocket, or the baseball nine's pocket, or the track team's little treasury in the spring."

"Oh, I see. The idea is to have the school—that is the fellows and the graduates—meet the athletic expenses, and not to ask the public for help."

"That's it," answered Don heartily. "But here comes Hillton."

A little squad of youths in crimson sweaters, headed by Gardiner and followed by the Hillton band, defiled on to the field, and the occupants of the stand where Wayne and Don sat were instantly on their feet cheering lustily. The band paraded with ludicrous dignity about the field, and at last found seats near by and for the fifth time began its programme. A moment later the St. Eustace players entered and were greeted with acclaim from hundreds of wearers of the dark blue and their friends, and received a cheer from the rival contingent. The two teams and their substitutes went busily to practicing, and Wayne watched Paddy, large of bulk and quick of action, snapping back the ball and forming the apex of numerous little wedges that grew and dissolved under the tuition of the coach.

The seats about the broad expanse of faded turf were filled now, and many spectators had taken up positions on the ground just inside the ropes that guarded the side-lines. Blue was the prevailing color, and only on one small section of the stand did the crimson of Hillton flutter. Presently the substitutes trotted off the gridiron and squatted, Indian-like in their blankets, along the sides, a coin was tossed, the teams took their positions, and

Paddy sent the new ball corkscrewing toward the St. Eustace goal, where it was gathered into the waiting arms of the St. Eustace full-back on the thirty-yard line and advanced by him over two white bars ere the Hillton ends downed him.

During the six years in which the athletic agreement had been in force between the two academies Hillton had won three of the football contests and tied one. Last year, and again the year before, her eleven had triumphed over the blue, and St. Eustace, with two consecutive defeats rankling in her memory, was this year determined upon victory. And it was the very general opinion that she would win it. To be sure, Hillton had played the usual number of games throughout the fall and had no defeats behind her. Westvale Grammar School had been beaten to the tune of 27 to 0; the local grammar school had been whitewashed by a monotonously big score; the neighboring military academy had managed to play a tie; and Shrewsburg High School had accepted defeat after a close and exciting contest, in which Greene had snatched a victory by a spirited forty-yard run for a touch-down. But those who knew shook their heads when the subject of the St. Eustace game was mentioned, and talked vaguely of a "lack of the right stuff," a term which conveys nothing to the mind of any one save a football player, but which means everything.

The preceding Saturday evening the four friends, with

numerous other boys, had obtained permission to go to the village and learn the result of the Harwell-Yates game, and when, in the telegraph office, the report that Yates had been the victor greeted them Paddy had sighed dolefully.

"That settles it," he had said. "We don't always win from St. Eustace when Harwell wins from Yates, but we've never beaten when she hasn't. It's St. Eustace's game." And no amount of argument could shake his conviction.

Wayne and Don voted the first half of the game dull. The teams were apparently evenly matched in defensive playing, and nearly so in offensive work. The ball oscillated from one twenty-five-yard line to the other, Hillton and St. Eustace both looking for an opportunity to send a back around for a run and finding none. Line-bucking made up the most of the play, and at this each team held its ground stubbornly when on the defensive, and attacked gallantly when it had the ball. It was only at the end of the half that anything exciting occurred. With but three or four minutes to play, and the pigskin near Hillton's thirty-yard line in St. Eustace's possession, the backs drew away from the line, and amid a tense silence the ball was passed to full for a try at goal. But Paddy it was who frustrated the attempt by breaking through St. Eustace's line and receiving the ascending ball on his broad chest. Don and Wayne were sitting on the lowest tier of seats

so that the former might lead in the cheering, and as the ball disappeared under a heap of wildly scrambling players he was on his feet, cap in hand, and the Hillton section was responding nobly to his appeal; the fellows delighted at a chance to applaud something worth applauding. The half ended with the ball in the arms of the Hillton fullback.

During the intermission Dave turned up, and the three boys stamped about the ground to keep their feet warm and sang "Hilltonians" vociferously to show their joy. And the band did wonders.

"Looks like a tie, Dave," said Don.

"Well, I don't know," responded that youth, with his usual caution. "Paddy's dreadfully used up; he's been playing center and left-guard and right-guard and half the team. And if Paddy goes out—well, we might as well go home and read about the game in to-morrow's paper."

"Bowles seems to be running the team well," mused Don.

"Yes, he's braced up wonderfully; he's all right. Gardiner's delighted with him. Two weeks ago he couldn't hold a snapped ball."

"Oh, have you seen Gardiner? What's he say?"

"Nothing, but he looks cheerful. That's a bad sign. When Gardiner looks cheerful, it means that he's worried. Hello! here they come again. Let's get these stuffed images to cheer." Dave turned to the seats: "Now, fel-

lows, you've been doing some of the worst cheering that I ever heard outside of a girls' school. We're going to win, but we've got to use our lungs. So let's give 'em nine long Hilltons, as though we were glad we're living."

The response was all that Dave desired, and he and Don and "Pigeon" Wallace, president of the senior class, kept the cheers going until the ball was aloft and the game was on again.

St. Eustace forced the playing at once. Down the field they came by short rushes, and ere the watchers on the stand knew what was happening, the ball was on the Hillton ten-yard line and the blue-stockinged backs were massed close behind their line for a tandem on guard. A yard resulted from this play. "Second down!" cried the referee. "Four yards to gain!" The Hillton boys were on their feet, cheering at the top of their lungs. Another massed attack, and but two yards was needed by the St. Eustace eleven. But those two yards were beyond accomplishment, for Paddy led the crimson line in a sturdy, desperate resistance, Hillton took the ball on her seven-yard line, and a moment after it was sailing down the field from Grow's nimble foot, and Wayne, Dave, and Don were yelling frantically and pounding each other enthusiastically over the head.

But back came the ball as before, St. Eustace's steady short rushes being supplemented once by a stirring run around Hillton's left end that brought the blue's cham-

pions to their feet in a mighty burst of noise. Past the middle of the gridiron went the charging St. Eustace players, and the ball was down on Hillton's forty yards ere another five minutes had flown by. Then the whistle piped shrilly and Dave clutched Don's sleeve.

"Paddy's laid out!" he cried hoarsely.

And so it was; and there was a deal of anxiety in that little throng until the plucky center climbed to his feet again and broke away from the trainer's hands. Then all Hillton shrieked joyously and the game went on. But it was plainly to be seen that Paddy was suffering, and it was equally evident that there was good reason; for he had not only to play his own position, but to help the guards as well, and now, to make his difficulties greater and to increase his troubles, the opposing team had decided upon a plan of play that made Dave writhe impotently in his seat, and which caused even Wayne's careless good temper to revolt. Time after time the full force of the St. Eustace backs was thrown upon Paddy. For long he stood it doggedly, holding his temper in check under every fresh assault; but there is an end to all endurance, and now, with fifteen minutes of the second half gone, Paddy was visibly weakening, and every successive plunge at the center of the Hillton line resulted in a greater gain.

"There's slugging going on there, Don!" cried Dave. "That St. Eustace right-guard struck Paddy then. You watch this time!"

The line-up was directly opposite the boys' seats and but a few yards from the side-line, and they watched attentively as Paddy was helped to his feet and groped his way to his place. "Tackles back!" called the St. Eustace quarter, "78—36—76—16—" Then the two lines met with a shock, there was a rasping of canvas, and ere the Hillton line gave and the St. Eustace backs piled through, a clinched hand rose and fell twice, and Paddy fell weakly to his knees and slowly stretched himself out on his face. Not only the three boys saw the blows struck, but almost every fellow in the immediate vicinity, and a veritable wave of hisses drowned the applause of the St. Eustace cheerers. And at the same moment Wayne, with blazing cheeks and angry eyes, leaped from the stand, darted through the throng about the rope, and strode menacingly toward the St. Eustace right-guard. But before his upraised fist reached the surprised player his arm was seized and in a moment he was struggling in the grasp of two of the Hillton team. Half of the Hillton crowd had impulsively followed Wayne's lead, and now an indignant horde broke through the ropes and invaded the field with loud cries for vengeance.

It was a time for action, and Gardiner, Greene, and several more of the wearers of the crimson resolutely stemmed the tide, pleading and threatening in a breath.

"Fellows! Fellows!" cried Gardiner. "Go back! It's all right; don't disgrace the school!"

"Get off the field, fellows!" shouted Greene. "I swear I'll knock down the first fellow that comes any nearer! You're acting like a lot of kids!"

"Make 'em take him off, then!" was the reply from dozens of throats, as the crowd wavered and gave back unwillingly.

"Yes, it's all right—it's all right," said Gardiner soothingly. "Only go back to the stand, like good chaps."

The boys withdrew beyond the wrecked ropes again, but did not immediately return to their seats. Many St. Eustace fellows had drawn near and were glaring threateningly toward them. Wayne, in the grasp of his friends, was dragged off the field, trembling with anger and doggedly promising the offending St. Eustace guard a licking after the game. Paddy, with a badly bruised eye, was supported to a place by the ropes, and the belligerent St. Eustace player was ruled out of the game. The Hillton contingent cheered lustily for Paddy and groaned derisively at his assailant, and went slowly back to their places, while the St. Eustace fellows were dispersed by some of the older lads. Then some one caught sight of Wayne, held in his seat by Don and Dave, and shouted, "Bully for Gordon!" which cry was taken up by others and prolonged until Don jumped up and faced the stand.

"Fellows," he pleaded, "shut up, please! Everything's all right now. Only keep still, will you?"

Laughter and cheers greeted him and good humor

came back to the crowd. A small junior shrilled, "We'll beat them, anyhow!" and the sentiment was applauded to the echo.

But victory for Hillton was too much to expect with Paddy no longer in line. Burton, who took his place, was a fair center, but far from heavy enough to stop the opponent's triumphant advance down the field, and though Hillton worked desperately for the next ten minutes the ball was at length within scoring distance of her goal, and again the St. Eustace full-back dropped back for a punt.

"Can't be done from there," whispered Don breathlessly. "It's forty yards, I'll bet." But Dave shook his head.

"That full-back's a wonder, they say, and I wouldn't be surprised to see him do it. If only we can get through!"

But the St. Eustace line held like a wall, the ball sped back, the full caught it neatly, and with admirable care poised it in his palm before dropping it. Then his toe caught it on the rebound and up it sailed, straight and unwavering, cleanly between the posts and over the bar! And blue flags waved and cheers for St. Eustace filled the air, and Dave and Don looked sorrowfully at each other and groaned in unison. Only Wayne in all that throng seemed not to heed or care; he was watching vindictively a boy who was waving a blue sweater on the far side of the field.

There was no more scoring done, although the Hillton team, to all appearances undismayed, returned to the game with hammer and tongs, as it were, and forced the ball to her opponents' twenty yards ere she lost it for holding, and afterward stubbornly and heroically contested every inch of turf ere yielding it to the victorious foe. But the whistle soon sounded, the two teams gathered breathless in mid-field and cheered each other, the St. Eustace band paraded the gridiron, followed by a shouting, dancing train of ecstatic youths with blue flags, and Wayne, still pining for vengeance, was dragged willy nilly to the village and on to the train and borne back to school under strict guard and in dire disgrace—a disgrace that did not deter many a mistaken fellow from clapping him on the shoulder, and whispering a hearty "Good boy, Gordon!" into his ear.

CHAPTER IX

PAINFUL LESSONS

"Pass a fork, Dave."

"Haven't one; use your knife."

"Can't get pickles out with a knife, silly. Can't you——"

"Here's one," said Wayne. "I was sitting on it. When will Paddy get here?"

"Ought to be here now. Wish he'd hurry; I'm getting most powerful hungry, as Old Virginia there says."

"Will he be elected?" asked Wayne, as he struggled with the cover of a biscuit tin.

"Sure to be," answered Dave, who was arranging the spread on the study table of No. 2 Hampton, now denuded of its customary litter of books, paper, and rubbish. "And he'll be here pretty quick; I told him we'd wait until nine, and if he wasn't here then we'd start in."

"Thunder!" yelled Don, suddenly leaping up and dancing around the table.

"What?" cried the others, in a breath.

"Where's the water? All the mustard in those pickles

got on top and—" He buried his face in the pitcher that Dave held out.

"Serves you right," grinned Wayne. "Had no busi ness tasting things."

"I like your cheek," said Don indignantly. "You've been sitting there eating biscuits for five minutes. Look, Dave, he's eaten the whole top layer off!"

"Pig!" cried Dave, and rescued the tin, placing it on the table, where it was flanked by sheets of writing paper in lieu of dishes holding potted duck, mince tarts, a pineapple cheese, and preserved figs, the latter overflowing in sticky streams on to the table top.

"What'll we crack the nuts with, Dave?" asked Don.

"Nuts? Find one of Paddy's football brogans in the closet. Crack 'em on the hearth and stuff the shells in Paddy's bed. Too late, though—he's coming, and he's got some one with him. Let's welcome 'em."

Paddy and Greene entered amid a fusillade of walnuts and cork stoppers, and by concerted action ran Dave into a closet and turned the key on him.

"Are you It?" asked Don eagerly.

"I'm It," replied Paddy, striking an attitude. "And Greene's a back number—aren't you, Greeney? And I can pommel you all I want and not lose my place on the team, can't I?"

"*Hooray!*" It was the muffled tones of Dave from the closet.

"Shut up, you! Greene withdrew and so I got the captaincy. He could have had it again if he'd wanted it."

"Rot!" said Greene. "I was out of it, and I knew it. Besides, I didn't want it again. Three times is too much. I'm awfully glad it went to Paddy. He'll make a good captain, Cunningham; don't you think so?" Don's reply was interrupted by the sound of breaking wood. Dave emerged from the closet in a heap, and, picking himself up, seized Paddy and forced him into a wild dance about the room.

"Hooray for Paddy—Captain Paddy!" he shouted. In the dance Paddy's nice white bandage came off and exposed a very black eye, which lent a thoroughly desperate and disreputable look to the countenance of the newly elected captain of the football team.

"By the way, Greene, do you know Gordon?" asked Paddy, as the boys found seats about the table and without further ceremony began the feast. Greene didn't, and very graciously shook hands.

"You're the fellow that got spunky to-day, aren't you?" he asked smilingly. Wayne nodded, looking bored.

"Wayne doesn't like the subject," said Dave. "It's a matter of lasting regret to him that he didn't reach that chap Kirkwell."

"Well, don't worry, my boy," said Paddy, as he filled his mouth with cracker and jam. "I reached him once. I didn't do it the way I should have liked to, of course,

because I was seeing double and having hard work to keep my pins, but I fetched him a very decent little jab on the neck. He got me four times before I gave up—hang him! Mind you, fellows, I don't believe in slugging, and I never did it before—that is, since I have been on the team—but to-day I got tired of having him bang me every time there was a mix-up, so I forgot myself." And Paddy grinned reminiscently and tried to wink his damaged eye at Wayne.

"Kirkwell's a dirty player," said Greene. "Pass some of that cheese, will you?—He played last year, you know, and Jasper caught him slugging once in the game with the Yates freshmen and put him off. Jasper's St. Eustace's captain," he explained to Wayne. "He's an awfully decent chap, too, and he promised me to-day that Kirkwell shouldn't play again if he could help it."

"Dave, Wallace was up yesterday to ask about the hockey team—wants you and me to join again. He's got seven games arranged; one with St. Eustace and one with a high school club at Troy, or somewhere. Want to go in?" And Don poised a tart in front of his mouth and waited a reply.

"I guess so. You going to try, Paddy?"

"I might. There's lots of time to decide. There'll be no decent ice on the river, I dare say, for a month yet."

"I'm going to try for it," continued Don. "We had lots of fun last year. Can you skate, Wayne?"

Wayne hesitated and munched a sandwich.

"Yes, I can skate," he said finally. "But——"

"Then you'd better report next Saturday in the gym," said Don. "Greene, are you trying for a scholarship this term?" Greene sighed.

"Trying? Oh, yes, I'm *trying;* but I haven't the least idea of making it. But I'm going to buckle down now and put in some hard licks at grinding. I suppose you're sure of one, aren't you, you lucky beggar?"

"No, I'm not at all sure; but I may win a Master's. Paddy's the only fellow here, I suppose, that's certain of a scholarship."

"Indade an' I'm not certain at all at all," said Paddy. "I've done well with Latin and fairly well with Greek, but, whisper, English has me floored. And old 'Turkey' has been putting the screws on me all term, bad scran to him. But," continued Paddy, with beautiful modesty, "me deportment has been of the best."

"Well, we'll all know in a month; and there's no good in worrying," said Dave. "Somebody have some more of everything."

"I can ate no more," answered Paddy sorrowfully "It's out of practice I am altogether."

"And I've had enough," said Don.

"Same here," echoed Greene. "I must be getting home. It's ten o'clock, and I'm dog tired. Good night,

fellows; and better luck next year, Paddy. Any one going my way?"

Wayne and Don arose, and the three said good night and picked their way out through the darkened hall and across the dimly lighted green toward their dormitories.

"By the way, Gordon," said the ex-captain of the football team, breaking the silence, "that was well meant today, you know—your jumping on that St. Eustace fellow—and nobody blames you; but—well, it isn't just the thing, you see—we don't do it at Hillton. You—you see what I mean?"

"Yes," answered Wayne gloomily. "I see what you mean, but I don't understand— Never mind, though, I'll remember next time."

"Glad you take it that way," said Greene. "It's not my place to mention it to you, only—being a chum of Cunningham's—and your first term here— Well, good night, fellows."

Wayne had almost fallen asleep, when he was aroused by a muffled chuckle from the direction of Don's bed.

"What's up?" he asked sleepily.

"Nothing," was the response. "I just remembered that I put the walnut shells in Dave's boots."

When Wayne told Don that he could skate, he had not been quite truthful.

"He asked me, 'Can you skate?'" reasoned Wayne:

"not 'Do you skate?' And of course I *can* if I try hard enough!"

But the argument didn't quite satisfy him, and he set out to lend veracity to it by purchasing a pair of half-clamp skates in the village and seeking an unfrequented pond fully a mile from the school. About Wayne's home in Virginia skates were seldom seen and more seldom used. But the boy had been ashamed to acknowledge his ignorance before the others who did so many things well. He had been about to qualify his assent by adding that he could not skate very well when Don interrupted him.

To learn to skate without instruction is almost as difficult as to learn to swim unaided, and Wayne's troubles began on the first afternoon that he eluded his friends and sneaked off through the village. The pond was hidden from the road by willows, and he had little fear of interruption. After a struggle of several moments he at last managed to affix his skates—he put the left one on the right shoe, and *vice versa*—and stepped on to the ice. The immediate result was as surprising as it was disappointing, for his first step resulted not in progress but in prostration, his head coming in violent contact with the frozen earth at the margin of the ice. He arose with a thumping headache, and after a moment of painful bewilderment turned his steps homeward, with a vastly increased respect for the art of skating and a heightened dislike for it as the result of his first lesson.

But he was back again the next day. He found a friendly branch leaning out over the ice, and with its aid experimented on his runners, making numerous remarkable discoveries in the next ten minutes. He found that it was necessary to place the rear foot at an angle while he advanced the front one, and that as long as the center of gravity of his body remained in advance of one foot he was in little danger of falling. But as soon as the branch was discarded he sat down just where the ice was hardest, and it took him a whole minute of the most careful management to get his feet under him again; and when that was accomplished he discovered to his dismay that he was sliding, as though propelled by invisible force, toward the very middle of the pond, his skates gradually parting company and his body held as though in the act of sitting. The thing was so disconcerting that he was heartily glad when he did take a seat, even though it was at a disheartening distance from shore. He first considered crawling back to *terra firma* on his hands and knees, but that would seem too much like giving up; so he again went through the remarkable contortions necessary to recover his equilibrium, and finally reached the shore after a series of exciting adventures, during which one skate became detached at the toe and his breath forsook him entirely. Four more falls completed that day's lesson, and he went back to the school with his head buzzing like a hive of bees and his body covered with bruises.

A thaw set in that night, and for the next few days he had to content himself with studying the art from a volume of the Badminton Library. The book wasn't much of a help. It seemed as though the famous skater who had written the chapter headed First Principles of Skating, and Suggestions to Beginners, had been so overpowered by the magnitude of his task that he had given up in despair before he had begun. The few facts of practical value which he had mentioned Wayne had already discovered by painful experience.

But two weeks before Christmas, and a week before the end of the fall term, the ice on the ponds again froze to a respectable thickness, and Wayne continued his self-instruction. Six excursions had been made to the little pond, and the boy had attained to a degree of skill which allowed of his circling the ice without falling, and he was fast becoming both fond of the sport and proud of his ability. But pride goes before a fall, especially in skating. One afternoon Wayne had twice encompassed the pond, and was seriously considering an attempt at skating backward, when one runner encountered a twig imbedded in the surface, and he took a most undignified tumble. His wounded feelings were in no measure relieved by the peals of boisterous laughter that issued from across the pond, where, hidden by the willows, Paddy and Dave had crouched, interested spectators of his disaster.

"Bully for Old Virginia!" bawled Paddy.

"I say, Wayne," shouted Dave, "do that again, won't you? I didn't see the first of it!"

And then, as Wayne strove to recover his feet and his dignity, their gibes took a new turn, and Dave asked Paddy with elaborate politeness what the young gentleman or the ice was doing; and Paddy assured him that he wasn't at all certain, but thought that the young gentleman was looking for something he had dropped; whereupon Dave thanked Paddy ceremoniously, and explained that he had supposed, judging from the fact that the young gentleman wore skates, you know, that the latter was skating; and Paddy assured him that he was mistaken, oh, quite mistaken, and that the young gentleman had no idea of skating; and Wayne floundered dejectedly up and sat down meekly on the bank, and told them mournfully that he didn't mind, only they might just cut out a little of it!

When Don was gleefully informed of the affair by Paddy, he grinned delightedly.

"That's just like Wayne," he exclaimed. "Pluckiest and obstinatest chump in school."

CHAPTER X

GRAY GOES INTO BUSINESS

The end of the fall term at Hillton is a busy time. The examinations occur then, and the award of scholarships is made on the last day of school. The less said about Wayne's performance at the examinations the better for any good opinion the reader may entertain of that youth. He struggled through; let that suffice. The highest scholarship for the upper middle class, the Goodwin, went to "Charles Fitzgerald Breen, New York city," and Paddy, blushing like a veritable junior, awkwardly bowed his thanks and received a salvo of most flattering applause. Don came in for the Carmichael scholarship, the next in importance, and Wayne cheered loudly, until kicked into silence by his chum. Dave's name was not mentioned, but he declared cheerfully that Paddy's success was "glory enough for all," and displayed neither disappointment nor envy. Wayne, you may be sure, expected no honors, and so was not one of the many youths who took their way out of the school hall in deep dejection.

Wayne was to spend the winter vacation with Don at

the latter's home in Boston; Paddy's holidays were to be observed in New York; and Dave, alone of the four, was to remain at school during the recess. Dave's only near relatives—for his father and mother were both dead—lived in California, and a visit to them was out of the question. Both Don and Paddy extended invitations, but Dave was shy of strange people and houses and preferred to eat his Christmas dinner in the academy dining hall; and so one bright and cold morning he said good-by to his three friends at the station, waved a golf club cheerfully after the receding train, and loitered back to Hampton House, whistling bravely but feeling very lonesome.

The winter vacation lasted two weeks, and Don and Wayne enjoyed every instant of it, and returned to Hillton when the new year was already a week old, refreshed in body and mind, Don full of plans for the track team and a victory for the crimson, and Wayne with his head crowded with admirable resolutions regarding study. Acting upon the suggestion of the principal, he had paid several visits to Professor Durkee, whose rooms were on the first floor of Bradley Hall, and the result had been most encouraging. The professor of English was a lean and wrinkled little man, well past middle age, whose crabbed manner and stern enforcement of discipline had gained for him the dislike of many pupils and the sobriquet of "Turkey." He was a hard taskmaster but a just one, and many a boy could have told a tale of leniency and kindness

in which the little professor would have figured well. Wayne found him goodness itself under his crusty exterior, and a most patient and lucid instructor in the studies that bothered the boy most. And even after Wayne no longer needed the professor's assistance he continued his occasional visits to the quiet study, and the two became firm friends.

Adhering to his resolves, Wayne spent more time at lessons, threatening to become, according to Paddy, a regular "grind." Paddy professed to feel the wildest alarm over Wayne's conduct, and suggested the infirmary as a suitable residence for a while; but Wayne didn't mind, and before long even Don was forced to acknowledge that his roommate was exhibiting a most commendable studiousness. Alone in the study one afternoon, before a comfortable fire, and doggedly struggling with Greek, Wayne was interrupted by the entrance of Carl Gray. Ever since the latter had accepted Wayne's loan he had punctually appeared each week with the promised fifty-cent payment, and a certain intimacy had sprung up between the two as a result of the visits. To-day he accepted the chair that Wayne shoved forward and put his wet shoes up to the blaze. But, contrary to custom, he did not at once bring forth his half dollar, and his host thought he detected signs of embarrassment on the younger boy's countenance and in his manner. They talked for a few minutes about school topics and the prospects for skating on the river. Then

Gray edged uncomfortably forward in his chair and cleared his throat.

"'Wheels' told me, that day you were in the office, Gordon, that when you have an explanation to make the best way is to go at it straight." He paused and seemed to be looking for inspiration in the glowing fire.

"Hang it, Gray," exclaimed Wayne, "I don't know what you're driving at; but if you're trying to tell me that you haven't—that it isn't convenient for you to pay that old money to-day—why, cut it out! I've told you already that I don't need it. How many more times do you want me to tell you?"

"Well, that's it," responded Carl Gray, breathing easier and looking grateful for the assistance. "But I'd like to explain about it. When I promised to pay you fifty cents a week I wanted to do it and meant to, and I still want to. I shan't forget the—the kindness——"

"Cut it," warned the other.

"Well, but I couldn't know that—the fact is, Gordon, that I didn't get any allowance this week, and, what's more, I don't think I'll get any next week. My mother writes that she has had to spend a lot of money on—on something she hadn't foreseen. And she says she knows I won't mind very much, since I have probably got a little saved from what she has sent before." The boy paused and sighed. "I—I never told her, you know."

"Of course not," said Wayne cheerfully. "But don't bother about my little old fifty cents, Gray. Tell your mother that you have gobs of money—just rolling in it; and if you don't mind taking a loan——"

"No," cried Gray sharply. "I'm not going to borrow any more money. But it's awfully good of you—indeed it is. I don't need any money—much; at any rate, I'm not going to take any more from you. But I wanted to tell you how it was, so that you'd understand that the reason I didn't pay you anything this week was because I didn't have it."

"All right. Only don't bother about it. Are you lower middle fellows in the Anabasis?"

"Yes, the first book. But there is something else I wanted to—to ask you about, Gordon. You see you're almost the only chap in the upper classes that I know; in fact, I don't know very many fellows, anyhow; and I thought that if you could help me you would."

"Of course I will," answered Wayne heartily. "What is it?"

"I want to earn some money. Not for myself exactly, but I'd like to pay you, and I'd like to send a little to my mother. I guess it would be a lot easier for me to send her money than it is for her to send it to me. I was hoping I'd get a master's scholarship, Gordon, but I suppose that affair of Porter's bill spoiled that; it would have been awfully nice."

"Yes, it would. But how can you earn any money, Gray?"

"I'm not sure, but I think I might make a little in this way. Do you play golf?" Wayne shook his head. "Well, fellows that do play have to give about thirty cents for balls; they're expensive little things, and after they have been used a bit they're likely to be dented and out of shape. Then they need to be remolded. Of course, remolded balls are never quite as good as new ones, but they're all right for ordinary use and good enough for lots of the fellows here."

Wayne had jumped up and now returned to the fireside with a handful of damaged golf balls, collected from various parts of the room.

"Are those the things?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Gray. "I can remold those. I learned how last year. A fellow I know has loaned me his press and I have everything else necessary. I thought that perhaps you wouldn't mind speaking to the fellows you know, just telling them that I'll remold their old balls for ten cents apiece, and do it well. Then, if they had any for me I could call and get them. Don't you think that would be all right?"

"You bet," said Wayne. "That's a jolly good idea. I'll get lots of balls for you to fuss with. And you can take these along with you now. Let's see—two, four, six, nine of 'em in all. They'll do to practice on."

"But, I say, Gordon, they're not yours, are they?"

"Mine? Great Jupiter, no! What would I be doing with the silly things? They're Don Cunningham's."

"But will he want them remolded?" asked Gray doubtfully.

"Of course he will, when I explain it to him. Here, put 'em in your pockets. And to-morrow, Gray, come around here about this time and I'll let you know what can be done. I think it's a jolly good scheme, and there are so many fellows here that play golf that we ought to be able to find heaps of old balls. If we could get hold of, say, a hundred, that would mean ten dollars, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, only it wouldn't be all profit, you know. Gutta percha costs quite a bit and so does paint. But it would be a lot of money, just the same; though if I could get fifty balls I'd be satisfied, Gordon."

"Fifty? Pooh!" said Wayne. "We'll get lots more than that. Just you wait and see."

"You're very good to help me; it will be a bother, I know; and you are so busy with your lessons, too."

"Oh, I'll find time between recitations, you know," replied Wayne. "Come up about this time to-morrow. So long."

"Good-by," answered Gray, "and—and thanks awfully, Gordon." Wayne scowled.

"Say, Gray, I wish you weren't so full of 'thank

you's.' You just tire me to death with them." Gray smiled from the doorway.

"All right; I'l try to remember. Good-by." He closed the door behind him, and Wayne turned back to his book. "I'll bet Dave's got a lot of old golf balls," he muttered as he found his place. "I'll speak to him to-night if I see him."

But Dave didn't turn up that evening, and the next afternoon, as soon as the last recitation was over, Wayne took a pad of paper and a pencil and started out to drum up trade. His first visit was to Hampton House, where he discovered both Dave and Paddy writing fast and furiously at the table, an atmosphere of excitement about them. Paddy stopped long enough to explain what was up.

"We're going to have a grand spectacular skating carnival on the river next Wednesday. All the fellows are going in for it. Wallace and Greene and I are the committee, and——"

"What committee?" asked Wayne.

"Oh, just a committee, you know, to get up the programme and arrange for the prizes and all that. We're going to have a lot of races, handicap, novice, class, and a hurdle race. Say, will you enter the novice?"

"I reckon so.—Are you going to try, Dave?"

"Yep," answered Dave, looking up for a moment from his work. "I'm down for everything."

"But how do you know that there'll be any ice by

Wednesday, Paddy?" asked Wayne. Paddy nodded gleefully toward the front window.

"Look at the thermometer, my lad; it was only twenty above a minute ago, and it's been going down steadily since noon. Oh, don't you worry about the ice. *That's* all right."

"Well, just as you say, Paddy.—Dave, have you got any old golf balls?"

"Yep, somewhere. Why?"

"I want 'em."

"Well, look about the place. There's one or two in that mug over there." Wayne searched the mantel and what drawers he came across, and soon had seven badly battered little globes before him. He shook his head.

"Those aren't nearly enough," he muttered. He looked around and his eyes lighted on Dave's closet. The boys at the table were too busy to heed him as he opened the door and brought out a box containing eight brand-new Silvertowns. At the hearth he laid his find down and picked up the fire shovel. Placing one of the immaculate white balls on the hearth he proceeded to knock dents in it. It was hard work, but he at last managed to disfigure six of the eight and was hammering at the seventh when a glancing blow sent the little ball whizzing into the air to the table where it landed with a bang under Dave's nose.

"What in thunder?" he cried, staring at Wayne.

"Beg pardon, Dave," said that youth, as he attacked the last ball with the fire shovel.

"But what—what are you doing, you idiot?" shrieked Dave.

"Why, you see, I could only find seven old ones, Dave, and I had to have lots more than that." Then he explained about Carl Gray, and Paddy forgot the skating carnival, for laughing at Dave's dismay at sight of his new balls. But the latter was soon won round to what Wayne called a proper view of it, and consented to pay ten cents apiece to have the fifteen balls remolded, and Wayne took himself off with his pockets bulging out as though each had the toothache. In the next hour he paid innumerable calls on his acquaintances—he was surprised to find how many he had—and at five o'clock returned to Bradley with a list which ran thus:

Cooper, 25 Masters, 3.

Benson, 36 Turner, doesn't know how many.

Moore, 30 Masters, 6.

Duane, 8 Bradley, 2.

Harrington, Goodrich's house, lots of balls.

Greene, 17 Warren, 10. Wants to know if you can mend a club; told him thought you could. Call at noon.

Bradford, 4 Turner, 6. Call after chapel.

There were as many more entries on the list, and Gray was delighted and full of gratitude to Wayne. When he

saw some of the fifteen balls that Wayne produced from his overcoat pockets he examined them curiously.

"These eight are awfully queer-looking balls," he said. "Look as though they'd been kicked about in a coal bin."

"Oh, you can't tell what Dave may have been doing with them," Wayne answered. "I dare say he's been trynig to burn them in the grate. But don't you care; take 'em along and fix 'em up, and if they're harder to do than the others, why, charge fifteen cents for them."

"They won't be," said Gray, laughing. "There isn't much wrong with them, and a coat of paint will do for several. And I'll take the list around to-morrow and get the balls. I think I can fix that club of Greene's; perhaps I could find others to mend. Really, Gordon, I'm awfully much ob——"

"Get out of here!" shrieked Wayne savagely. Gray got out, but in the hall he stopped.

"O Gordon!" he shouted.

"What?"

"Thank you."

Then he scuttled downstairs.

CHAPTER XI

THE MYSTERIOUS SKATER

The skating carnival received faculty indorsement in an odd way. Paddy entered Academy Building one morning to find Professor Wheeler in front of the bulletin board, on which the entry list for the races was posted.

"Good morning, Breen," said the principal. "I see that you are going to have a skating carnival."

"Yes, sir," answered Paddy.

"I used to skate once, Breen; I wonder now if I've forgotten how? I believe I'd like to try it, anyway. Couldn't you add a faculty race, Breen? I'd enter—that is—" He paused doubtfully. "That is, you know, if I can find another member of the faculty to race with. And I think I can; yes, I'm certain of it," he added smilingly. "Add the faculty race, Breen, and I'll promise you two contestants at least."

"We'll do it, sir," answered Paddy eagerly.

"Very well; come to the office to-morrow and I'll give you my fee." And the principal went off smiling broadly, and Paddy flew to report the wonderful news to Wallace

and the other members of the committee. The next day Professor Wheeler paid his entrance fee, and a second fee, which he explained was for another member of the faculty who had consented to race.

"And who is he, sir?" asked Paddy.

"Ah! that is a secret at present, Breen. But there is his fee, and you may enter him as X——, an unknown quantity. And he'll be on hand next Wednesday. By the way, what distance is this faculty race to be?"

"We thought a half mile would suit," answered Paddy.

"A half mile? Tut, tut, my boy, we're not so old and disabled as that. Change it to a mile, Breen, if you please."

There was a deal of speculation throughout the school as to the identity of the second faculty member. It might be Tomkins, who was big and strong enough to win a race on skates; or it might be Beck—most of the boys thought it was—for he could skate well and frequently did. Or—well, it might be any one of the thirteen instructors, barring "Turkey," of course, who was too old to skate and might blow to pieces in a stiff breeze. The day of the racing carnival was awaited impatiently.

Wayne meanwhile practiced almost every day on the lake or the river, preferring the former because less frequented. Often Dave and Don accompanied him, and the three took turns at holding Don's stop-watch while the others raced together over the mile or half-mile course.

The afternoon preceding the carnival was almost dark when the boys took off their skates at the river's edge and started up the steep bank below the campus and a long half mile from the Academy. They were going to cut across the fields to the village and leave their skates to be reground for the morrow's contests. But halfway up the ascent Dave paused and drew the others' attention to a figure across the river. Wayne and Don stopped and followed the direction of Dave's arm. Under the shadow of a clump of trees across the bare sweep of purple ice they could just make out the form of a person skating slowly, and, as it appeared, stealthily up the river, holding as close as possible to the gloom afforded by the fringe of bushes.

"Who is it, I wonder?" said Don.

"Probably one of the fellows who has been practicing down stream in the hope of surprising us to-morrow?" suggested Dave. But Wayne shook his head.

"It isn't a boy, it's a man; and he's got a long muffler around his neck. See, he's stopped!"

"Where is he?" asked Dave. "I can't see him now."

"Look straight across to the thickest clump of bushes He's in the dark there, and I believe he's watching us Looks as though he didn't want to be seen, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does.—I say, fellows, let's go over and have a look at him. What do you say?"

Don's suggestion was greeted with enthusiasm, and the boys tumbled down the bank again and proceeded to don

their skates. The twilight had deepened now, the river had become a broad path of gray between its darker shores, and the figure beneath the trees was lost to sight.

"Is he still there, do you think?" asked Dave, as he struggled with his clamps.

"Yes," said Wayne, "I've watched. If he goes on he'll come against that light space of sky there and we can see him."

Dave's runners were fastened first and he started across the ice, whispering to Don to hurry after, and in a moment was part of the gloom. Don followed the next instant, and Wayne, still working with his obdurate straps, was left alone. Then came a whistle and the sound of ringing blades on the frozen surface. He slipped the last buckle into place and followed up the river in pursuit of the skaters. Once he heard a shout, but he could see nothing save the high bank beside him, and, far up the ice, the twinkling lights of the school buildings. Once he came a cropper over a protruding spit of graveled beach, but picked himself up and was soon on his way again.

Suddenly the sound of skates ahead of him, and drawing nearer, brought him to a pause.

"That you, Dave?" he shouted. "That you, Don?"

There was no reply; but a figure, black and formless, shot out of the gloom ahead, swung about with a short sweep of grinding runners almost under his nose, and again disappeared in the direction from which it had come.

Wayne gave a cry and started in pursuit. It was like playing blindman's buff. Sometimes he thought he caught a glimpse of a darker spot in the blackness ahead, but was not certain. His own skates drowned the noise of those ahead. But the twinkling lights grew nearer and nearer, and he gave a long shout of warning to Dave and Don, who must, he thought, be waiting for him ahead. An answering shout from far off sounded, and Wayne slid for a moment and strained his ears for the sound of skates. He heard it, but judged that the unknown had gained on him, and he strained every muscle to overtake him. As near as he could tell he was now at a point almost in the middle of the river and about opposite the boat house. The next moment he swept toward the latter, for above the noise of his own skating he had detected the sound of clumsy steps on the boat-house landing. And then, while he believed himself still well out from the shore, his ankles encountered the edge of the landing and he pitched, headforemost, halfway across it, and sat up just in time to hear a chuckle in the darkness and the sound of footfalls on the steps leading up the cliff to the path above. With an exclamation of anger Wayne got up, stumbled across the planks, and tried to climb the stairs. But his skates were sadly in the way, and he soon gave up the effort and felt his way back to the edge of the landing, where he sat and rubbed his bruised shins and shouted for the others. Don arrived first, breathless and excited.

"I almost had him!" he panted, "but he doubled just off the point and he's gone back down the river. Where's Dave?"

The two shouted loudly, and an answering hail came from near at hand. The next instant Dave felt his way cautiously up and fell into Wayne's lap.

"Did you see anything of him?" he gasped. Don repeated what he had told Wayne.

"Where did you say he turned? At the point under Academy Building?"

"Yes," said Don.

"Why, you idiot, that was me!" Wayne laughed and Don returned, a trifle crossly:

"Well, why didn't you sing out, then?"

"Because I didn't suppose you were chasing me. I thought you were just following. I never caught sight of the fellow after he darted out of the bushes and struck up the river. He was gone in a second."

"Well, you won't catch him," said Wayne. "He's got home by this time." And he recounted his adventures. Dave whistled.

"He was a bully skater, anyhow. I'll bet it was Paddy!"

"Nonsense!" answered Don. "He wasn't built like Paddy."

"No, he wasn't one of the fellows," Wayne said. "He was a man, not very tall, and he had a muffler wound round

his neck. And—and the funny thing about it is, that it seems as though I had seen him before somewhere."

"Well, let's get these silly skates off and hurry up about it," said Don disgustedly. "It must be getting late, and I don't want to have to feed on crackers and sardines the way I had to the other night. And we must get permission to take the skates to the village after supper."

"Anyhow," said Wayne, as he tugged at his straps, "I'm sure of one thing; and that is, if I see that fellow tomorrow I'll recognize him."

"Same here," responded Dave.

Wayne found a note from Carl Gray, together with Don's remodeled golf balls, on his table when he returned to his room after supper. Don examined the balls with interest.

"Pretty good work, I call it, Wayne. They look about as good as new and have a dandy coat of paint on 'em."

Wayne read the note. "Friend Gordon," it ran, "here are those balls of Cunningham's. Some of them are not done very well. They were the first I tried, and didn't mold so well as I'd like to have had them. I wish you'd not let him pay for them, because they're not very good and you've helped me a lot." ("Of course I'll pay for them," interrupted Don.) "I've remolded over forty balls so far, and have nearly twice that many to do yet. I thought you'd like to know how I was getting on. I sent some money home to-day and am going to pay you Satur-

day. I fixed Greene's cleek, and I think it as good as new; and I have three more clubs to mend. If business keeps on increasing I'll have to open a shop, I guess. Couldn't find you, so write this instead. Yours, Gray. P. S.—*Thank you.*"

The last sentence was much underscored, and Wayne grinned as he threw the note aside.

"Decent chap, that Gray," he said.

"I can't say as to that," answered Don, "but I do know that he's a good hand at remodeling golf balls."

CHAPTER XII

THE FACULTY RACE

When Paddy awoke the next morning his first act was to throw back the blinds and look eagerly at the thermometer hanging outside the window. It recorded fourteen above zero, and he gave a grunt of satisfaction as he scurried to the fireplace, raked the embers together, and added a fresh log. There was no likelihood of either snow or rain marring the skating surface of the river, and the state of the thermometer precluded a thaw. Paddy was in the best of spirits all the forenoon, as he and Wallace and the other members of the committee scurried from the school grounds to the village, and from the village to the scene of the coming contest on the river.

The "skating carnival" had been proclaimed far and wide; its fame had even reached the neighboring towns along the Hudson, and at two o'clock the boat-house float and steps and the river bank, as well as the frozen surface thereabouts, was thronged with townspeople from Hillton, Euston Point, and other hamlets. Of course the academy turned out in full force; the junior class attended in a body

prepared to aid their champions by every feat of lung and throat. A clear stretch of smooth ice about ten yards from the shore had been roped off for the track whereon the sprints and a hurdle race were to be contested, while a series of red flags—borrowed from the golf club—marked the course of the half-mile and mile events. There was an appearance of dignity and importance about the scene that pleased Paddy mightily, and made him carry his bright blue badge with great pride.

Dave, with his usual hopefulness, had entered for everything for which he was eligible. Don was down for the hurdle race and a half-mile event, and Wayne had entered for the mile race for novices. Paddy was to take part in the class event and the mile. The afternoon was a perfect one for the sport. The sun shone dimly at times, the breeze, too light to interfere with speed, was nipping cold, and the ice was in fine condition. Professor Beck had consented to act as referee, and several of the other professors wore judges' badges and tried earnestly to understand their duties.

There were many entries for the half-mile handicap and a lower middle-class fellow won it easily from scratch. In the mile race for novices Wayne finished well up in the first crowd and was quite elated. Both Paddy and Dave were entered in the mile event, and the former won from a field of some twenty fellows by a generous ten yards. Dave struggled along bravely and cheerfully, and seemed well

satisfied with sixth place. When the class race was called twelve boys stood on the mark, three entries from each class, and the juniors gathered in a body at the starting place and cheered their men and their class loudly and tirelessly until the contestants sped away over the shining course, their runners ringing musically on the frosty air. Dave was one of the chosen three representing the seniors, Paddy held the hopes of the upper middle class, and the lower middle banked on the fleet youth who had previously won the half-mile handicap. The juniors placed implicit faith in a small and wiry boy who looked scarcely over thirteen years of age. The twelve kept well together for the first of the three laps constituting the mile, but when the flags were reached the junior champion sprang to the front, followed by the three senior class fellows, and the balance strung themselves back along the course, Paddy laboring manfully to hold himself in for the last half lap. As the skaters sped by the point where Wayne and Don were watching, the former recognized one of the lower middle-class entries as Carl Gray, and drew Don's attention to him.

"Gray?" said Don. "Oh, the fellow that comes to see you every week on that mysterious business? Well, he skates well, doesn't he? He ought to finish pretty decently, I should think. Paddy's just dying to 'go up head,' isn't he? And look at old David; wouldn't you think he was an ice wagon on runners? Poor old chap!

I believe if somebody got up a flying match he'd enter."

"He ought to have known better than to have got in the lead so early in the race," said Wayne.

"Well, I guess he thought that if he didn't get in front now he never would," laughed Don. "But he'll not be there after this round."

And he wasn't. When the last spin over the course began, it seemed as though Dave stood still, for the entire field of skaters, with one exception, sped by him ere the remaining distance was one fourth traversed. The single exception was the small junior who had forced the skating and who was now too used up to keep his lead. A hundred yards from the finish eight of the ten leaders were so closely bunched as to render guessing the winner a difficult feat, and Wayne and Don, shouting loudly for Paddy, didn't know who had won until the judges gave out the result a moment later: Breen, first,; Gray, second; Wallace, third. The upper middle had captured first place, the lower middle second, and the seniors had to be content with the third prize. Dave and the small junior fought stubbornly for precedence and the latter won by a yard, and Dave was enthusiastically presented with a piece of ice, in lieu of a booby prize, by a delegation headed by Don.

Meanwhile a flight of six hurdles, two and a half feet in height, had been put in place, and Don and three other fellows—one of them Greene—were on the mark. Hurdle

racing on skates is a difficult accomplishment, even when low hurdles are used, and success depends not alone on speed. The contestant who has not undergone the hardest practice over the bars and learned to take them in much the same manner as does the hurdler who is running on cinders, might as well save his breath, and possibly a hard fall. Of the four contestants entered Don was acknowledged the best, since his long training at track hurdling enabled him to perform on ice in beautiful style. Although not so speedy a skater as Greene, he was a more perfect hurdler, and he was looked upon as the winner. The jumps were placed thirty yards apart, and the entire distance to be raced from starting line to finish was two hundred and ten yards. At the report of the pistol the four started well together. Conroy, a lower middle-class fellow, took the lead and covered the twenty yards intervening between the line and the first hurdle at fine speed, but only to come an inglorious cropper at the first leap and to find himself utterly out of the race ere it was well begun. Greene, and Jackson, the fourth man, took their hurdle side by side, and were halfway to their second before Don was in the air. At the third hurdle, however, Jackson was behind, and Don and Greene were rising for the jump at the same moment. And now form over the obstacles began to tell, for while Greene was able to cover every intervening twenty yards at a faster pace than Don, the latter gained ground at every hurdle, taking off at his full speed and in each case barely topping

the wood, while Greene perceptibly decreased his speed before each leap and always jumped from three to six inches higher than was necessary.

Cheers for the boys filled the air as they raced for the last hurdle, Don a bare foot in advance of Greene, and Jackson just taking his fifth jump. At the sixth hurdle Greene's performance was even clumsier than before, and Don's skates clanged down on the ice at the very moment the former was rising to the jump. But in another moment the two were again almost side by side, for on the level Greene's speed told, and it was nip and tuck to the tape. But Don managed to hold the slight advantage gained at the last hurdle and Greene accepted second place by the narrowest sort of a margin.

"If you were as fast on skates as I am, or I was as crack a hurdler as you are," he told Don laughingly, "one of us would be a wonder."

A half-mile straight-away race followed, but Don, who had entered for this event, stayed out, being too winded to do himself justice, and the race was won by the small junior, who had somehow found his speed again. And then the event of the day was called, the great faculty race, in which Professor Wheeler and a mysterious Unknown were to compete over the mile course. Conjecture as to the identity of the Unknown was still rife, and as Professor Wheeler, on a fine new pair of full-clamp skates, advanced to the starting line, the throng watched and

waited impatiently for the other competitor. All the professors were present, even "Turkey," and not a few wore skates. It might be any one of them. Professor Beck skated to the line, and a murmur of "It's Beck!" arose, only to be drowned by a second murmur of "No, it's Longworth!" as the junior instructor in mathematics also approached.

"Who is the other competitor, sir?" asked Wallace, who was to act as starter. The principal looked toward the shore.

"He is coming now, Mr. Starter," he answered smilingly. The throng about the line followed his gaze and gasped in wondering amazement. Skating toward them, and leaving a ripple of amused laughter in his wake, his head covered with a fur cap whose lappets were drawn down over his ears, with a long woolen muffler wrapped about his throat and a pair of old-fashioned wooden skates strapped to his feet, came—Professor Durkee!

A moment of silent surprise was broken by a laugh that quickly resolved itself into a loud cheer. On the outskirts of the crowd, where they could not be seen, impish juniors doubled themselves up with laughter. More dignified seniors shouted hoarsely to keep from following the example, and even Professor Beck smiled broadly at the odd figure of the principal's rival for honors. Whether Professor Durkee was aware of the sentiments aroused by his appearance none can say; if he was he carefully concealed

the fact; and after a few explanations from the referee the two professors stood on the mark, silence fell, the pistol banged, and the great faculty race was on!

Professor Wheeler sped away up river at a pace that soon dropped the English instructor yards behind. But fellows who knew the length of a mile on ice shook their heads and predicted that the pace was too good to last. Perhaps Professor Durkee thought so too, for he made no effort to win the side of the flying principal, but skated serenely on, his coat tails and the ends of his knitted gray muffler flying in the wind.

"Isn't he a sight?" asked Don, with a grin.

"Oh, he's something to dream of," giggled Paddy. "But he can skate, can old 'Turkey'! He has a style like—like—a scarecrow."

At that moment Dave flew frantically up.

"What do you think?" he gasped. "It was 'Turkey'——"

But the words were taken out of his mouth by Wayne, who slid out of the crowd and embraced Paddy to keep from falling.

"Say, fellows, it was Professor Durkee that we saw on the river last night."

"And chased!" supplemented Dave.

"Get out!" cried Don. "Who said so? How do you know?"

"Recognized him!" answered Wayne. "Knew him as

soon as I set eyes on him. I told you last night that it was a man, and that he wore a muffler thing around his neck. Remember?"

"And I know too," said Dave. "He looked just as he does now when I saw him."

"Well, the desavin critter!" exclaimed Paddy.

"I'll just bet it was him!" said Don. "He had been practicing and didn't want us to see him."

"Yes; and I'll bet he'll beat 'Wheels' all hollow!"

The boys crowded their way to a place by the course. Far up the ice the flying figures were making the turn and heading back to the starting point. It was difficult to discern which was ahead, but presently as they drew nearer Professor Wheeler was seen to have maintained his lead of about twenty yards. Cheers, loud and prolonged, greeted the skaters as they made the turn and commenced the second round.

"Go it, 'Turkey'!" yelled the throng, all forgetful of respect in the excitement of the moment.

"Bully for 'Wheels'!" cried others, and only ceased when Professor Beck was seen smiling broadly at Professor Longworth. Up the river once more sped the racers, the ludicrous figure of the English professor maintaining its position behind the principal and never gaining or losing. The latter was slackening speed a little now, and many fellows were remarkng, "I told you so!" in superior tones. But Professor Durkee refused to take advantage of the

other's lagging, and as they turned at the flag and headed back, the watchers saw that the relative positions were still the same. Down toward the starting point they came again, and again cheers welcomed them. Professor Wheeler had plainly overtaxed himself in the first lap and was now trying to recuperate. He was a very graceful skater, using a long strike and handling his feet easily and well. Professor Durkee, on the other hand, possessed no style, kept his body quite rigid, and took rapid, short strokes. And what, with his flying coat tails and muffler and his wildly swinging arms with a red mitten at the extremity of each, he was in truth a strange and humorous spectacle.

Around the flag they went, the principal still holding his lead of twenty yards, but looking a bit worried, and the English professor, his queer old face solemn and inscrutable under the fur cap, seemingly content to let the other keep the advantage. It was the last lap now, and as the two drew away upstream champions of each grew loud and excited in their claims.

"Why, 'Wheels' can leave him at the flag if he wants to!"

"Course he can. He's just letting 'Turkey' down easy."

"Oh, can he? Well, just you wait and see! Why, 'Wheels' is done for already; he's plumb beat!"

And so on, while the contestants reached the farther end of the course and made the turn. And now the spec-

tators thronged the ropes that guarded the finish, cheering excitedly. Down the ice sped the skaters; a quarter of the remaining distance was traversed when a shout arose.

"Durkee's closing up!"

And so he was. His feet were moving so fast over the frozen surface that they were just a blur to the sight, his coat tails were flapping gloriously, and he was closing up the gap! But the principal was yet game, and with a hundred yards or so still to cover and with Professor Durkee close behind him he spurted again to the front and had put several more yards between him and his rival ere the latter was aware of it. And then—well, then the red mittens moved so fast hither and thither that they looked like a streak of fire, the muffler ends stood out straight in the wind, the coat tails followed suit, the wooden skates bit and clanged on the ice, the little professor became a small cyclone, and the watchers held their breaths, too astonished to even cheer.

Now the coat tails were even with the principal, now they had passed him and were flapping derisively in his face, and now they were far beyond reach. And then amid the delighted acclaim of hundreds "Turkey" crossed the line like a specially constructed whirlwind and won the faculty race by a dozen long yards!

CHAPTER XIII

IN TRAINING

"Candidates for the track team report to Professor Beck, at the gymnasium, at 3.45 P. M., Saturday, February 12th.

"DONALD CUNNINGHAM, *Captain.*"

This notice was posted on the bulletin board in Academy Building one morning, and fellows on their way to recitations read it and became suddenly aware that, from an athletic standpoint at least, spring had begun. From that same standpoint winter is a short-lived season in Hillton—a mere ten weeks between the last football game and the call for track team candidates; a brief space in which the hockey players pose as heroes, the Hillton and St. Eustace chess clubs prepare for and hold their annual contest, the debating club membership grows, the school librarian is for once busy all day long, and the juniors conduct mimic battles and sieges on the green, their citadels and ammunition both constructed of snow. And then some morning while the mercury still lingers affectionately about

the zero mark a little square of paper appears on the bulletin board, and, officially at least, the vernal season is ushered in.

This year, as usual, with the appearance of the call for track team candidates a veritable epidemic of athletic enthusiasm swept over the Academy. The crew candidates, who for weeks past had been quietly exercising with chest weights and dumb-bells and running around the track without occasioning any particular notice, now went to work on the rowing machines and were daily viewed by a throng of their fellows. The baseball players congregated in the cage and pitched and batted and slid about on the canvas to an accompaniment of low-voiced criticism from chaps who pressed their noses through the wire meshes for a half-hour at a time. Golfers polished up their clubs, bought brand new books on the sport, and were to be found practicing putting in the dormitory halls. A few lads flocked together in warm studies and talked of wickets and overs and bowls, and tried hard to convince themselves and each other that they were enthusiastic cricketers. And all the while the ice on the river was thick and hard, the wind swept across the green in wintry gusts, and the snow was piled high on either side of the walks.

But if the green and the campus and the frozen paths were deserted, the gymnasium, especially after two o'clock in the afternoon, was a busy scene. Of the fifty-odd boys who reported for the track team, forty-two were put to

training. With most of them the new work was disappointingly similar to that gone through with all winter. The chest weights banged up and down, the rings swung about under the high roof, the ladders creaked and bent between their braces, and the dumb-bells and Indian clubs swung faster than ever. But many of the candidates were put to work on the wooden track in the hour when twilight filled the gymnasium with strange and grotesque shadows and now and then some candidate for honors with the sixteen-pound shot was allowed to toss a leather-covered sphere about the place, to the imminent danger of everybody's toes.

Professor Beck, from a quiet, even-voiced, little gentleman, suddenly became a commanding figure, who was here, there, and everywhere, and whose least word was like a trumpet sound. Boys who were not candidates for the track team or the baseball team or the crew or something —and there appeared to be few of them in those days— were not admitted to the floor of the gymnasium after a certain hour in the afternoon, and so congregated at the little walled-off inclosure by the entrance and scoffed or praised, envied or admired, to their heart's content and to the despair of the performers.

One afternoon, a few days subsequent to the beginning of the track candidates' training, the gymnasium was more than usually full and noisy. The crew was hard at work in the rowing room, a half dozen fellows were trotting

about the track, and the boys under Don were putting in a preliminary ten minutes at the weights. Taken as a whole they were a fine-looking lot, though to the uninitiated many would have appeared too slight in build for athletic success. These were the sprinters and hurdlers and those of the new candidates who were desirous of becoming such. They showed speed rather than strength and were in some cases slender to a degree. It was not difficult to distinguish the new candidates from the experienced, even when they were in gymnasium attire; the matter of chest development alone afforded unmistakable proof. In the same way the jumpers and pole vaulters could be picked out. A greater development of the chest muscles was noticeable, resultant on the short, sharp effort required in their work. Of the several boys present who had been members of the last year's team as long-distance runners, three at least indicated their specialty by their build. Their chests were quite as highly developed as those of the jumpers, but the development was more general; their tasks required staying power as well as strength of lung. Of the performers with the heavy weights, Dave Merton was a fair example. Both the twelve-pound hammer and the shot belong of right to athletes who have weight in their favor, since it is only by putting their weight into the effort that success with hammer or shot may be hoped for. The exercise brings into play the muscles of the back and loins, widens the body across the

shoulders, and gives plenty of room to the heart and lungs. To a less extent the legs are benefited and the entire muscular system gains in elasticity.

Professor Beck emerged from the rowing room and cast his gaze over the gymnasium floor, letting his eyes rest first on one and then another of the exercisers at the weights.

"That will do at the weights, boys," he announced presently. He referred to a book which he took from his pocket. "Morris and Graham and Gordon, to the running track and do a half mile; and by the way, Graham, don't labor under the impression that you're trying to catch a train; take your pace from Morris. You too, Gordon; you run too fast. Jumpers and sprinters had better get in some work with the dumb-bells. I'll have a look at you presently. The rest of you know your work, I think."

He turned to Don, and the two discussed the candidates for some time, while Wayne joined the men on the track and proceeded to put twelve laps behind him at a moderate pace. Wayne's presence among the track team candidates requires some explanation. Continued study with but little outdoor recreation had begun to create a listlessness that had surprised and worried him. Don, when consulted, explained the matter in very few words.

"You've been cooped up indoors and have had no exercise; what can you expect? Staying indoors makes a chap's brain sluggish. The sooner you take up some exer-

rise that'll interest you, the sooner you'll be able to study well again."

"But what is there to do?" asked Wayne.

"Why, report on Saturday and try for the track team. You half promised, anyhow, you know."

"More dumb-bells?" growled Wayne.

"At first, yes. But when we get outdoors you'll be glad that you went in for the team. You'll like it after the first week, Wayne. Besides, as a favor to me, you know!"

"Oh, well, I just as leave. I don't mind those chest weights any more. And I dare say it'll give me something to do in spring. And I reckon it *would* make my lessons come easier."

So the name of Wayne Gordon was entered in the list of candidates for the track team, and he underwent an examination which appeared satisfactory to Professor Beck and began training. He was already enjoying the work. There was a definite object ahead to lend encouragement at the most trying moments, and even the dumb-bells were not so monotonous as formerly. Gymnasium work had already made a perceptible change in the lad. He had got rid of not a little superfluous flesh since the cross-country race, and his muscles were firmer, his complexion was clearer, and he felt better. He even acknowledged this, somewhat grudgingly, to Don.

"They're pretty good things—chest weights and dumb-

bells and single sticks—after you get used to 'em," he said.

To-day was his second appearance on the running track. He had discovered the day before, greatly to his surprise, that he was not expected to race around the building as fast as his legs would carry him, but that a jog trot was what pleased Professor Beck best.

"I don't want you to make any records up there, Gordon," the professor had informed him. "If you're to make a success at long-distance running you must get off some of that fat, breathe properly, and learn endurance. Just put your head back, take long breaths, and jog around at an even gait. Never mind style; we'll take that up later."

So Wayne jogged. He rather liked it to-day. There was something soothing in the pat-pat of the runners' shoes on the floor. His breath came easily, and as he went around he could look down occasionally upon the heads of the fellows below: at Dave who was going through the most extraordinary antics with a leather-covered shot (Dave always had recourse to the shot when he could not lay hold of a hammer); at Don and Professor Beck, the former emphasizing his words by digging the toe of his gymnasium shoe into the mattress in front of the vaulting standard; at a string of fellows at the far side of the building and under the track who were exercising with the wooden dumbbells; at the little group of idle boys at the doorway; and

as he made the turns he could glance through the high and broad windows and catch glimpses of the frozen river and far-stretching snow-covered marshes.

Presently Professor Beck and Don parted company, the latter joining the squad at dumb-bell exercise and the former fixing the standard for the pole vaulters, two of whom were soon at work taking low flights. There was something very attractive about the way in which the two white-clad and lithe-bodied youngsters gripped the long poles and rose gracefully into the air to drop noiselessly to the mattress beyond the crossbar, and Wayne became so interested in the performance that he forgot to run and had to be recalled to a recollection of his duty by Morris, who gave him a playful kick as he jogged by.

But the half mile was soon finished, and Wayne left the track, descended the stairs, and sought the director, who was busy instructing Dave and two others in the matter of holding the shot. After a moment he turned to Wayne.

"How do you feel, Gordon?"

"Fine, sir."

"Think you could run another half-mile?"

"Oh, yes."

"Good; but don't try it. I guess you've done enough for to-day. Take a tepid shower now and rub yourself down well with your hands before drying. And, by the way, let me tell you what I mean by a shower. I don't mean that you must turn on the water and stand under it

until your teeth chatter; but get under it and get out again — slip through it, as it were. Remember that as long as you're in training, Gordon. Too much bathing is worse than none for weakening you. I don't mind telling you that we are going to have need of just such a runner as I hope you will turn out to be. You've got a little work ahead of you, and there are certain regulations which may seem a trifle irksome at first; but I hope you'll persevere; you've got a good incentive to train hard and conscientiously. And when you get tired or out of sorts, why, take a rest. You can't rest too much when you're training; only make sure that you are resting and not loafing. Both Cunningham and I expect a good deal from you, Gordon; hope you won't disappoint us."

"I'll try not to, sir, although I haven't much faith in myself as an athlete, you know."

"That'll come after you've done something; of course it's all new to you yet, and there's a good bit to learn, but I'm sure you'll make a go of it. And you'll like it better when you can get out of doors. Meanwhile don't overeat, get a good nine hours of sleep, and don't let yourself get tired. And if you want to ask any questions you'll find me here, you know."

Wayne thanked him and disappeared in the direction of the bathroom. Professor Beck looked after him thoughtfully.

"A good back for running, and endurance written all over him; and obstinacy, too. It may be," he mused, "that we can make use of that obstinacy for a good purpose. But I hope he doesn't shy at something or get balky."

CHAPTER XIV

BENSON MAKES A FIND

"Thought you'd like to know," explained Dave, as he mechanically formed a snowball and threw it with precision at the head of a passing acquaintance.

"I'm glad you told me," replied Wayne, frowning intently at the icy path they were traversing on the way from chapel to breakfast. "I think it's a mean thing to do—tell the fellows about it when he hasn't any proof against Gray."

"Yes, I told him I thought he was making an ass of himself," concurred Dave. "Benson isn't a bad sort, you know, and I guess he really thinks that Gray took the money; and of course, if he thinks that——"

"But he has no business telling it about school," declared Wayne hotly.

"No, he hasn't. And I don't believe that Gray took the old bill. He doesn't seem that sort, you see. Any fellow that can fix up second-hand golf balls to look like new doesn't steal. Why, Gray remolded those brand new balls of mine so that they are almost as good as they were before you lammed them with the fire shovel!"

"Of course, Gray isn't a thief!" said Wayne. "I suppose the fact of the matter is that Benson just mislaid the money somewhere and can't find it. But he has no right to say that Gray stole it. And I'm going to see him and tell him so."

"Good boy! Hope we don't have hominy this morning."

Wayne found Benson in his room in Turner at noon. Benson was a jovial, good-natured chap whom Wayne knew but slightly. He was in the senior class, though he had occupied four years in getting there, and was somewhat of a leader among a coterie of idlers whose aim was to have as good a time as they could and to pass the examinations by as narrow a margin as was possible. But there was nothing vicious about Benson, and Wayne had always liked him as much as their slight friendship warranted.

"Say, Benson," Wayne began, as he took a seat on the edge of the study table, "what's this about your losing some money and suspecting Carl Gray of taking it?"

"Why, nothing to make a fuss about," answered Benson. "It's this way. You know you came and asked me if I had any golf balls that needed fixing up, and I said I had. And the next day this fellow Gray came and got them. And then a couple of weeks later he turned up one day when I was sitting here and brought them back. I'd just got a letter from my aunt, and the old lady had inclosed a two-dollar bill. That's a way she has, bless her! The bill was laying on the table near you there. I was reading

a library book—Ploetz's Epitome of Universal History, it was—and so when Gray came in I just told him to lay the balls on the table and said I'd pay him the next day; I owed him sixty cents, and didn't have any change. Gray said all right and he hoped I'd like the balls, and went out. Then afterward I looked for the bill and it wasn't there. Maybe he didn't take it," concluded Benson good-naturedly, "but it wasn't to be found, and so I naturally suspected him."

"But Carl Gray isn't a thief, confound you, Benson!"

"Well, I dare say he didn't take it. It doesn't matter. But you said yourself that he was awfully hard up for money, you know, Gordon; and I thought that perhaps he saw the bill and concluded he needed it more than I did."

"Well, if you really think that Gray took the money I'll pay it back to you myself. Only you've got to keep your mouth shut, Benson, and not go telling it all around school. Why, hang it, it's a shame to say such a thing about a fellow unless you can prove it!"

"But I haven't been telling it all around school," said Benson indignantly. "I haven't told a soul except Dick Barrow."

"Well, Barrow's told everybody else, I reckon. I learned it from Dave Merton this morning. You ought to know that if you tell a thing like that it's sure to get around."

"Well, I'm sorry, Gordon. I didn't mean to be nasty about it. Besides, I don't care about the two dollars. The

dear old lady has sent another two since then—this very morning, in fact. I'll tell the fellows that it's all a lie; Barrow's an awful liar anyhow, you know."

"I think you'd ought to hunt for the money," responded Wayne.

"Hunt? I have hunted, Gordon. I hunted all through the room the day it disappeared."

"Well, I know that Gray didn't steal it. But I'm going to pay it back to you."

"No, you're not, Gordon. I don't want your money. If Gray didn't take it you've no business paying it to me; and if he did take it, I don't see where you come in. Hang it, I said I didn't want the money. What's the good of fussing about it?"

"Lots of good," replied Wayne angrily. "You've spread a report that Carl Gray stole the money from you. You'd no business doing that, and you know it. I'm going to pay the two dollars to you so that you'll shut up."

"I've told you that I didn't spread any report; I only told one fellow. And I had a right to tell him if I wanted to."

"Why haven't you accused Gray to his face?"

"I will if you send him up."

"No, you won't, either. You've done enough harm already with your old two-dollar bill. If you're halfways decent you'll try and stop the story from getting around any more."

"I like your cheek, Gordon," answered Benson, slamming a book down on the table. "If I've made a mistake in mentioning the thing to Barrow I'm sorry, and I'll deny the story whenever I hear it; I can't do any more than that, can I?"

"But what did you do it for?" insisted Wayne.

"Why, I've explained it, haven't I? What's the good of talking about it any more? If the money was stolen, it's stolen, and——"

"It wasn't stolen, and you know it, Benson."

"I don't know anything of the sort," responded Benson, losing his temper. "I only know that you tell me Gray isn't a thief; maybe he isn't. But the money was there when he came in and it was gone when he went out; and he wanted money. If you've got anything else to say, say it to Gray."

"You're a coward, Benson, to make such a charge when you can't——"

"Well, on my word! Say, you'd better get out of here, or——"

"Or what?" asked Wayne defiantly.

Benson restrained himself with an effort and walked to the window.

"If you don't I will, and you can talk to the table."

Wayne bit his lip, scowled at the motionless back of the other boy, and slid to the floor. At the door he hesi-

tated with his hand on the knob. Then he returned to the middle of the study.

"I say, Benson, I'll take that back, you know—what I just said. I reckon I've been acting like a cad ever since I came in; but you see Gray's a friend of mine, and——"

"Oh, that's all right; no harm done. Of course you'd feel mad about it; I dare say I would in your place. Sorry I ever opened my mouth on the subject." Benson turned back toward the table and smiled good-humoredly. "If you hear the yarn again you might deny it for me. Will you? Just say I was lying, you know."

"Perhaps you'll find the money some time," suggested Wayne.

"Eh? Find the money? Oh, of course I might. Still—" Benson paused and stared at Wayne. Then his face lighted up. "By Jove, Gordon, that's a good idea! I'll find it this evening!"

"Yes; it might have fallen into a drawer or somewhere like that, you know."

"Of course it might. I—I dare say it fell back of the drawer. Perhaps it's there now, Gordon."

"Perhaps it is."

Very seriously Benson, fumbling in his vest pocket, advanced to the table and pulled out the left-hand drawer. Then he thrust his hand into the aperture.

"Feel anything?" asked Wayne.

"Yes, I think I've got it." He withdrew his hand and held up a two-dollar bill. "Isn't that luck?"

"Yes indeed," replied Wayne unsmilingly. "And I'm awfully glad you found it. I'll tell Merton, and get him to tell the others."

"I wish you would. And I'll tell Barrow right away. I suppose I put it into the drawer and forgot about it, and then it got pushed out at the back. I should think that was the way it happened, eh?"

"Must be," answered Wayne. "Well, I'll get out now. Awfully much obliged to you, Benson, for—for hunting it. And I hope you'll forget anything I said that wasn't——"

"That's all right, Gordon; forget it yourself. Glad you came in."

Wayne hurried away to his room for a book, and on the way he pondered over Benson's story. Of course, Benson might have been mistaken, but Wayne couldn't blame him in his heart for suspecting Gray, under the circumstances. Had Gray really taken the money? He *was* hard up at the time, undoubtedly; and perhaps the temptation had been too great for him. On the other hand, Carl Gray didn't look like a fellow that would give way to temptation so easily, and he had kept every promise made to him. No, Gray hadn't taken the money, Wayne concluded, and he hoped that the story would not reach his ears.

But it had. Gray was sitting in Wayne's easy-chair talking to Don when Wayne reached the study, and after the latter had found his chemistry notebook Gray accompanied him across the yard. He broached the subject at once. He had heard the report in a roundabout way, and scarcely knew whether to credit it or not.

"I'm very sure, Gordon," the boy declared, "that there wasn't any money near me when I was in his room that time. I laid the golf balls on the table; I should have noticed a bill if it had been in sight. I didn't take the money, Gordon, honestly! Won't you go with me to see Benson? You could tell him that—that—well, you know me a little. Why, if the faculty hears of it——"

"Shut up!" cried Wayne, who for several minutes had been trying to interrupt the flow of the other's nervous explanations and protestations. "The money wasn't stolen. It's been found. Benson found it himself. It had fallen out back of the table drawer. I was there when he found it."

"Really?" cried Gray. "I—I'm awfully glad!"

"Benson didn't mean the story to get out. You see, Gray, he thought he had left the money on the table, and when he went to look for it after you'd gone he couldn't find it. He hunted everywhere—as he thought—and—and it didn't turn up. And then he—he suspected you. I told him he was mistaken, and so we hunted some more, and he found it in the table, you know. I wouldn't worry

about it. I don't believe many fellows heard it. And he's going to tell all of them that the money is found, and so am I. He's very sorry about it."

"Well, I don't suppose he was to blame. Of course, he —he didn't know me very well. It was good of you to see him, awfully good. Why, perhaps if you hadn't gone there he wouldn't have found it."

"Oh, yes, he would have, some time. But I'm glad I went. Well, here's where I do stunts with chemistry."

"You're—you're quite sure it was found, Gordon?" asked Gray as Wayne ran up the steps. "You're not just saying that to make me feel better?"

"Of course it was found," cried Wayne. "Didn't I tell you that I saw Benson find it, you chump?" Gray turned away, apparently not quite convinced, and Wayne went on into the hall.

"My!" he muttered with a grin, "I'm getting to be an awful liar!" He frowned over some obtruding thought. Then he pushed open the recitation-room door with a violence that won him a scowl of annoyance from the professor.

"Nonsense!" he told himself, as he took his seat and opened his book; "Gray *didn't* take it!"

CHAPTER XV

WAYNE RAISES A FLAG

March came in like a lion that spring and roared and raved over the river and about the dormitories and made life out of doors a hardship that few cared to brave. Ere it was a week old it had piled the ice in walls along the river banks, swept the green bare of snow, and snapped the tall flag post in front of Academy Building. Wayne and Don hugged the fireplace when not at recitations or in the gymnasium, and got a lot of studying done. Wayne's ability to learn his lessons had increased of late, and he was ready to give credit to Professor Beck and the steady training he was undergoing. Physical exercise clears the brain, and Wayne discovered an improvement before he had been at work with the track squad for two weeks. He even began to speak tentatively of trying for a scholarship, and Don grinned and cunningly encouraged him by saying:

"Oh, well, you can try, of course. But I don't believe you can make it. You won't stick to it long enough; you'll get tired of studying after a while."

An assertion which Wayne indignantly denied.

"Just you wait and see! You needn't think you and Paddy are the only fellows in school who can get scholarships!"

Gymnasium work was much the same as it had been since Don and Wayne went into training; there was always the chest weights and the dumb-bells, and Wayne knew every splinter and crack in the running track by this time. But he had dropped two or three pounds of weight, and felt better for it; he had made the acquaintance of a number of the candidates who were the sort of chaps that it was well to know; he had secured a new interest in school life, and he was able to talk more or less intelligently with Don upon subjects that occupied full half of that youth's thought—namely, the approaching spring handicap meet and the more distant interscholastic contest. Don had thrown himself heart and soul into the task of turning out a winning track team, and, being a youth who was willing and eager to back his mental efforts with the hardest sort of physical labor, he was in a fair way to succeed. For two weeks past he had been in correspondence with a number of Hillton graduates, and now he was able to announce that he had secured promises of active assistance from almost all of them, and that the track men would not want for coaching.

"Barret is coming in April," he told Wayne one day. "He was a star hurdler at college a couple of years ago. Then Kenyon, who holds the intercollegiate two-hundred-

and-twenty-yard record, and Burns, who won the one hundred yards last spring, are both coming to coach the sprinters. Remsen, the old football coach, is coming, and I think he'll be willing to teach Dave and Hardy and Kendall a few tricks with the weights. We need a middle-distance man and some one who knows something about pole vaulting. Johnstone may come; he's half promised. As for you and Chase and Treadway and the rest, why, Beck will look after you; he's a dandy coach for the distances; he used to be a fine runner in the mile, and held the intercollegiate championship for a couple of seasons. We'll be well fixed for coaches this spring."

"Seems to me with all those men to help," said Wayne, "we can't help winning."

"It doesn't follow. You see, St. Eustace and the other schools will have just as many good grads coaching them. St. Eustace generally has a whole army of them. That's one bully thing about that school: you never hear of it begging for aid of any sort from the alumni; the alumni's always on hand and waiting to help. Of course, I don't mean that Hillton graduates aren't like that, only—well, sometimes they seem a bit backward in coming forward."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Wayne; "perhaps if the truth was known we'd find that St. Eustace captains have just as much trouble getting the old fellows to go there and coach as you have had. I know from what Dave told me

once that Hillton fellows always help the school all they know how."

"Good for you!" answered Don, with a grin. "'Rah for Hillton!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"Nothing much; only that you are coming on. I think I can detect symptoms of patriotism, Wayne."

"Pshaw! Of course a fellow always stands up for his school; he'd be mighty poor trash if he didn't."

"Glad to hear you say so," responded Don dryly. "You didn't seem to be impressed with that fact when you first arrived in our midst with your two trunks and an air of supreme importance."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Wayne. Don smiled silently, as though at an amusing thought, and Wayne observed him with rather an embarrassed expression. Finally he broke the silence.

"Stop grinning there like a chloroformed catfish, Don! I suppose I was rather a silly ass when I got here. But, you see, I hadn't been away from our little old village very much and didn't know a great deal about boarding schools." He paused and looked reminiscently into the flames. "You and Dave and Paddy were awfully nice to me. I must have seemed a powerful sulky brute!"

"Well, you were a bit exasperating at first with your high and mighty views of the school and the fellows and

the way in which we conducted things here at Hillton. But we all kind of took to you the first day; perhaps that was the reason. I'll never forget the afternoon you walked in here, plumped your valise down, and asked why the nigger hadn't lighted the fire!"

"But it was chilly," objected Wayne.

"And when I explained very respectfully that you would be obliged to share the study with me, you looked me over very condescendingly and remarked: 'Well, I reckon it's the rule; but seems to me they might have told me that.'"

"Did I say that?" asked Wayne meekly.

"Every word. And I don't mind acknowledging now that I was sorely tempted to knock your head against the wall."

"Well, I'm glad you didn't. Because if you had we wouldn't have been chums. But I wonder why you didn't kick and get another roommate?"

"That's the funny part of it, Wayne. I suppose I must have liked you even then. By the way, do you remember how mad you got one day when Paddy told you that you spoke with a 'refined negro dialect'?"

"Yes," answered Wayne, "I remember. Well, I'm glad I've learned a little sense since then. I felt powerful mean and homesick the first few weeks I was here; and you and Paddy and Dave were awfully decent to me. It isn't the thing that a fellow talks about, of course, and I

hate to have any one get 'sloppy,' but, honest, Don, I won't forget it, you know."

"Oh, quit your joking!" cried Don, jumping up. "Let's go over to Hampton and bother Dave."

So they struggled into their sweaters and went. The sound of hammering and shouting aroused their curiosity, and they made a detour to the front of Academy Building to learn the meaning of the noise. A group of workmen were putting the finishing touches on the new flagstaff, and already it reared its length aloft on the edge of the bluff, the glistening gold ball at the top of the slender mast shining bright against the gray sky.

"Phew!" exclaimed Don. "She's a tall old stick, isn't she? Must be a good fifty feet, eh?"

"Worse than that," answered Wayne. "I should say about sixty."

"Maybe. I wonder if they'll get a new flag. The old one's pretty well worn out."

"Say, Don," Wayne suggested as they hurried on toward Hampton House with their ears tingling, "wouldn't it be a grand joke to run a flag up there to-night ourselves? Think how surprised 'Wheels' would be in the morning!"

"By Jove! Great scheme. Come on; let's tell Paddy and Dave."

Those young gentlemen hailed the idea with glee, and called Wayne a public benefactor and many other flatter-

ing things. The fact was, life had been deadly dull of late, and the continued indoor existence was beginning to affect their spirits. The idea of having a flag raising of their own appeared illumined with brilliance, and the quartet at once began arrangements.

"But we haven't a flag," objected Dave.

"Let's make one. It ought to be something more startling than the Stars and Stripes," said Paddy. "I wish we had a class flag. I tell you, fellows, let's run up a skull and crossbones!"

"Just the thing!" giggled Wayne. "Where'll we get it?"

"Have to make it. Dave's got some black paint stuff, and we'll use a sheet or something."

"Pillowcase would be better," said Don. "Rip it open, you know."

"Splendid! We'll use Dave's."

"Use your own," responded Dave. "If I supply the paint you'd ought to supply the pillowcase."

"Well, all right, stingy. Get your paint stuff."

Paddy's pillow case was quickly produced and ripped at the seams, and the four boys squatted about it on the floor, while Don drew a skull—at least, he declared it was that—and a pair of very stout bones beneath it. Then Wayne, claiming the right by virtue of the origination of the idea, filled in the design with some extremely sticky varnish, and the flag was complete.

"That's not black at all; it's sort of brownish," Wayne objected.

"Well, bones aren't black, anyway," said Don. "Besides, it shows up finely. Now how'll we get it up there?"

Plans were discussed until supper time, and at length it was decided to go and have a look at the pole and the halyards on the way to the dining hall. This was done. The workmen had departed, the new ropes were flapping sharply against the pole, and the boys found everything ready for them. They didn't linger there, for fear that they would be observed and connected with the affair the next day, but went on to supper, agreeing to meet in Hampton at nine o'clock.

At a few minutes past that hour four muffled and mysterious figures scuttled across the yard, keeping in the shelter of the laboratories and the gymnasium, and gathered about the flag pole. Detection was out of the question, for the night was as dark as the most desperate mission could demand. Above them the topmast creaked complainingly in the wind and the halyards beat a tattoo against the wood. Very quickly the new flag was attached, Paddy complaining *sotto voce* because the varnish stuck to his hands, and Wayne laid hold of the other rope.

"Hats off!" commanded Don in a husky whisper.

Four cloth caps left as many heads bare to the cold wind, Dave whistled a lugubrious march beneath his breath,

and Wayne ran the flag upward into the darkness and the teeth of the March tempest.

"Hold on," whispered Paddy. "Pull it down again!"

"What's the matter?" asked the others.

"Why, don't you see, they can get it down! Shall we allow our flag to be lowered? Never! So let's cut the rope that the pillowcase is on. Then they'll have nothing to lower it with!"

The others studied the problem a moment in silence. Then, "Well that sounds reasonable," muttered Wayne. "Let's try it anyway." So the flag came down, and Paddy cut the halyards a few inches beneath it. Then the skull and crossbones was again hoisted, this time with scant ceremony, the severed length of rope was stuffed under Paddy's jacket, and the four conspirators parted with muffled laughter. Above them in the wind-swept space the ominous standard flapped in the darkness.

CHAPTER XVI

AND LOWERS IT

What a commotion there was the next day!

Wayne and Don found the flag pole surrounded by a throng of delighted and amazed youths when they wandered unostentatiously to the front of the Academy Building on their way to chapel. What a chattering there was! Juniors hinted proudly that they knew more about it than they were inclined to impart, and that when it came to pure and artistic pranks their class "was really the only one, you know!" The lower middle fellows accepted the presence of the fluttering white banner with its derisive and unlovely emblem as a direct challenge from the juniors, and there was much talk of "punched heads." The upper middle fellows asserted positively that it was the work of a certain secret society which, despite the rules, had to their knowledge been flourishing at Hillton for many years. The seniors—well, the seniors acted like all seniors. They viewed the flag with secret gusto and outward disgust and talked about "disgrace to the school" and "finding the fellows that did it, by Jove!" And Wayne and Don and

Paddy and Dave, loud in expressions of surprise and condemnation, mingled with the throng and laughed in their sleeves.

Then every one ran for chapel and listened impatiently for the faculty's expression of its views on the subject. They were not disappointed. When the time for announcements came, the principal disposed of the minor affairs with his usual tranquillity, and then took up the subject of the flag. Wayne and Don, Paddy and Dave, sitting together at the back of the hall, experienced a distinct sense of disappointment. Instead of taking the appearance of the skull and crossbones as a thing demanding censure and threats of expulsion, the principal ridiculed their splendid effort!

"I presume," he remarked without any evidence of feeling, "that it is the work of some junior. It could scarcely be anything else. The trick is so little and silly that none but a very young and mistaken boy would have thought of it. Whoever put the flag up there arranged matters so that it can not be pulled down. It would be possible for us to have the topmast lowered, but as that would necessitate a large expense we shall not do it. So the flag will, of course, continue to fly there, a very fitting symbol of the school's idea of humor, until the wind whips it to pieces. It may be that it will bring a certain amount of ridicule on the Academy, and the sight of it may arouse sensations of disgust in the breasts of sensible boys, but there is no help for it. The faculty will take no steps to

discover the author or authors of the silly trick, and they will not have the satisfaction of knowing themselves to be offenders against the school authority. They are in no danger of the slightest punishment; I do not even ask them to own up to the affair or offer apologies. The incident is closed so far as the faculty is concerned. It would, however, have been more appropriate had the design on the flag been a donkey's head; but it's too late to change it now."

The four conspirators walked out of chapel in a silence that held them until they parted at the steps of Warren Hall. Then Dave spoke:

"Smart, weren't we?"

There was no reply, and the four went into breakfast feeling, as Paddy afterward put it, "like excommunicated angels." Wayne was very silent during the forenoon and only scowled at every effort of his friends to engage him in conversation. The juniors posted a notice immediately after breakfast calling for a meeting in Society House in the evening; and the example was quickly followed by the other three classes. Indignation ran high. The humor had departed from the affair, and the prospect of having the skull and crossbones fly in front of Academy Building during the rest of the school year was most unwelcome. The four perpetrators of the trick felt this as keenly as any.

"It's got to come down," said Wayne doggedly, when the four congregated in 15 Bradley after lunch.

"Well, how's it coming down?" asked Paddy.

"We were awful asses," said Don disgustedly.

"It wasn't exactly our fault," answered Dave. "If 'Wheels' had only been decent about it! But what can you do if faculty won't take your efforts toward enlivenment in the proper spirit?"

"Has any one tried to get the old thing down?" questioned Paddy.

"Yes, lots of fellows have tried. Wayne pulled the flag so far up that a corner of it's fast in the pulley arrangement," responded Don. "If he hadn't been so keen to overdo the thing——"

"Oh, dry up! What's the good of blaming Wayne. We were all in it equally," said Paddy.

"Yes, that's so," admitted Don. "Let's try and think of a way of getting the bloody thing down."

"Bony thing," corrected Dave.

"Look here, fellows, I got the thing up there—it was my idea in the first place—and I'll get it down again." Wayne scowled around the little circle. "All I want you fellows to do is to quit nagging. Who knows where I can get a boat hook?"

"There's slathers of 'em in the boathouse," said Paddy.

"Well, you get me one—a real light one. I'll borrow Moore's climbing irons, and after laboratory work I'll have a try at it."

"Can you climb?" asked Don doubtfully.

"Some," answered Wayne. "There are spikes in the pole up as far as the crosstree. After that I'll use the climbing irons as far as I can, and then shin the rest of the way."

"But I don't see what you want a boat hook for," said Dave.

"To get hold of the flag, of course. It's stuck in the block. If I can get the hook in it I reckon I can pull it free."

"Oh, I see. Well, you might try."

"I don't think we ought to let him try," said Don anxiously. "It's an awful long way to the top of the thing, and it's blowing a gale. At any rate, Wayne, you'd better wait until to-morrow. The wind might blow you off."

"No, it's got to be done to-day. We don't want to attend the class meeting this evening and have to get up and tell the fellows that we did it and we're awfully sorry, do we? We'd look like idiots! No, I'll try it this afternoon, wind or no wind."

"Well, look here," exclaimed Paddy, "I was in this as much as you were, Wayne, and I'm stronger than you, and if anybody is going to climb that pole it's going to be me!"

"No, I put it up; it was my scheme," answered Wayne stubbornly. "I'll get it down."

Paddy's remonstrances were of no avail, and the others at last gave their consent to the undertaking. Paddy

promised to get the boat hook, and they agreed to meet at four o'clock and try to undo their work.

Paddy's appearance at the flag pole armed with the boat hook and Wayne's advent there with a pair of climbing irons over his arm was sufficient to draw a crowd, and soon the vicinity was thronged with curious watchers, who danced about in an endeavor to keep their feet warm or sought shelter from the cold blasts in the doorway of Academy Building. Dave and Don soon arrived, and the latter viewed with apprehension the task ahead of his chum. Far up in the air the white banner bearing the ridiculous skull and crossbones fluttered and whipped in the wind as though quite as much ashamed of its appearance as were the boys, and resolved to put an end to its luckless career with every convulsive tug at its lashings.

"I do wish Wayne wouldn't try to climb up there," muttered Don in Dave's ear; but Dave was explaining the proceedings with great gusto to "Pigeon" Wallace, and so didn't hear him. Wayne himself was strapping the irons to his stout shoes, and Paddy, looking as though he wished himself well out of the whole affair, stood by with the boat hook, to which a length of rope had been attached. Through the audience sped the startling information of Wayne Gordon's contemplated adventure, and a murmur of excited interest arose; and boys who had absent friends sped away in search of them. As Wayne took his gloves

off and put his foot on the first of the spikes that rendered more or less easy the ascent of the lower pole a wholly impromptu cheer arose and gained in volume until it resolved itself into a loud "'Rah—'rah—'rah, Gordon!"

Wayne paid no heed; he was already halfway up the great white-painted mast that terminated many feet above in a broad crosstree. It was easy going, save for the wind and the fact that the climbing irons interfered when he laid his feet on the rests. But the crosstree was quickly reached, and he pulled himself on to it, and clutching the topmast with his left arm, with the other pulled up the boat hook by means of the rope, one end of which was tied around his waist. Those below saw that after one fleeting downward glance he raised his eyes and did not again risk dizziness.

"Gee!" exclaimed Paddy, his head craned back as he gazed aloft. "See how the wind blows up there!"

"Is there any danger of the thing breaking?" asked Dave.

"Not a bit. It's a nice new pine, and it'll stand lots. But if Wayne gets up there and loses his grip— Say, I wish we hadn't let him do it!" Paddy looked with troubled eyes into Don's pale countenance.

"Here comes the whole blamed faculty!" cried Dave, and as the group of boys turned to look Professor Wheeler, accompanied by "Turkey" and Longworth, pushed into the assemblage.

"Who is that up there?" the principal asked sternly.

"Wayne Gordon, sir," answered a dozen voices.

"Gordon! *Gordon!*" The principal made a trumpet of his hands and shouted at the top of his lungs. "Come down at once!"

There was no answer from the figure on the crosstree. Possibly the wind was too strong to allow of the principal's voice reaching him; possibly Wayne heard, but thought the command issued from one of the fellows. At all events his only response was to seize the slender topmast with his arms, dig his climbing irons into the wood, and start upward. The principal again shouted.

"Best let him alone, sir," said Professor Durkee calmly. "I doubt if he can hear; but if he can 'twill only bother him and make the task more hazardous." The principal turned sternly to the throng about the pole.

"Did none of you know better than to let him do this? Is that you there, Cunningham? I should have thought that you, for one, would have stopped him!"

There was no reply from the throng, and Don accepted the rebuke with a miserable countenance. It was Paddy who ventured a defense.

"He would go, sir. Nobody can stop Gordon when he makes up his mind, sir." The principal's only answer was a gesture of exasperation. Then all eyes were turned upward again.

Wayne had reached a place where, because of the

slenderness of the pole, his irons were of no further use. To take them off was a difficult task, but to keep them on rendered farther progress well-nigh impossible. So he drove the spike on his right foot deep into the mast and unbuckled his left iron and threw it far out beyond the edge of the crowd below. Clinging to the pole with his legs and his left arm, he managed at last to undo the remaining iron and kick his foot free from the straps. Then he wound both legs about the mast, gripped it firmly with his hands, and began to shin upward again. He wished that he had left his shoes at the crosstree, for his stockinged feet would have gripped the wood much closer. But it was too late to think of that. The wind and the exertion had almost deprived him of breath, and now, as he reached a point some twenty feet above the crosstree, the topmast began to get woefully slim and swayed sickeningly in the wind. For an instant he stopped climbing and clung motionless. To the watchers below it seemed that he must be about to give up. The mast looked scarcely larger round than one's arm, and the boy's figure, a dark atom against the sullen gray of the flying clouds, swayed from side to side perilously.

But Wayne had no thought of giving up. He only paused a moment to gather breath for further effort and then went on, his feet, legs, and arms gripping the rocking pole with all their strength. One circumstance aided him: the mast had been varnished but a few days before, and presented to his hands a slightly sticky surface that made

his grip surer and easier. He feared but one thing, and that was a look downward. He strove with all his might against the irresistible temptation to let his gaze drop for just a fraction of a second; he knew that if he yielded vertigo would master him. So far he had been successful, but now, with his task almost accomplished, the golden ball but a few feet above him, something seemingly stronger than his will forced him to lower his head. He stopped climbing again and, with despair at his heart, clung tightly to the swaying mast. His eyes dropped to the roof of the neighboring laboratories, to the ice-covered walk that led to Academy Building, to the edge of the throng!

A murmur of dismay and apprehension crept through the crowd. For a moment the March tempest was stilled, and in that moment, faint, and as though from a great distance, came a cry from below:

"Keep agoing, Old Virginia!"

Wayne recognized Paddy's deep voice. With a rush the blood drove back to the boy's chilled heart. He gave a gasp, threw back his head, and found himself staring at the golden ball, which, for the first time, seemed to beckon him upward. Arms and legs responded strongly to his demand, and inch by inch the remaining distance was won.

Some five feet from the swaying tip he again paused and gripped the mast, now scarcely more than a rod, and again hauled up the boat hook. The skull and crossbones flared and snapped loudly and derisively. Taking a firm

hold of the mast with his left hand, he reached forward the long shaft. The first effort drove the hook through a corner of the white cloth; the first tug freed it from the pulley block, and with a rush the hook and flag came down. But Wayne was careful not to let the former drop. Holding it firmly, he started to descend, the flag following. And from the throng below broke a cheer that was quickly hushed lest it confuse the boy. But the rest was simple and the crosstree was quickly gained. The wind, as though angry at having been deprived of its seeming prey, lashed and whirled at him as he dropped easily and quickly from one foot rest to another. A few feet from the ground the boy paused and detached the flag from the rope. Then he stepped down into the throng. A dozen pairs of arms were outstretched to him and a rousing cheer went up. Don, pale and trembling, thrust himself through the crowd roughly and threw one arm around his shoulders.

"Wayne!" he whispered huskily.

Wayne smiled lightly back at him and pushed forward. He met a glance of sly understanding from Professor Durkee's little gray eyes and a nod of approval. Then the principal was speaking.

"That was bravely done, Gordon, and we owe you thanks. But don't try anything of the sort again."

Wayne met the principal's grave eyes and grinned.

"I won't, sir. But nobody owes any thanks. You see, I put it up there!"

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE CINDER TRACK

One morning in late March the earth awoke to find that during the night a little south wind had melted the last vestige of ice and snow in the shaded corners, and that Spring was busy cleansing the land ere beginning her housekeeping. The gravel walks were soft underfoot and little blue ribbons of water trickled across them. The willows in the meadow at the base of the hill had suddenly put on their vernal costume of tender russet, and the campus, a veritable quagmire for the nonce, was doffing its faded livery, and, to the close observer, revealing in favored hollows and sheltered slopes a garb of soft green velvet. Along the station road the thrush proclaimed its pleasure at the new order of things in clear, sweet notes that trembled in the soft air like intangible sunflecks. The river rehearsed in gentle murmurs a new song as it rippled past island and point, and reflected on its bright surface the tender blue of the sky and the fleecy whiteness of the slowly sailing clouds. Spring had come in the valley of the Hudson.

And never was spring more welcome. The winter had been severe and protracted, and to youth and health the enforced captivity indoors had long since grown irksome. Suddenly the boathouse became the scene of much activity and the two crews took to the water with all the delight of young ducks, and the sound of oars and of the coxswains' voices floated up from the river every afternoon. Baseballs and bats made their appearance and swept through the school like an epidemic. The campus became the center of Academy life, and the golf links was dotted with enthusiastic players. As soon as the cinder track had dried sufficiently Professor Beck and his charges took possession, and outdoor training began with spirit.

The winter term came to an end, and spring vacation depopulated the school for the better part of a week. Don and Paddy both went home for an "over Sunday" visit, the former's duties as captain of the track team precluding a more extended absence, and the latter's dislike to be away from Dave for any length of time causing him to cut his presence in the bosom of his family to the shortest possible length. Dave stayed at Hillton and Wayne kept him company. Both kept up their training about as they would have done had no vacation been in progress. Wayne had now attained to a development of lung power that satisfied even Professor Beck, and his triweekly performances on the gymnasium running track had given place to almost daily walks over the country roads or across fields; often

there was a little cross-country run participated in by Wayne and others. No effort was made to cover the distance quickly, and the instructions were to avoid hard running; so the lads trotted easily over a two-mile course in a bunch and had plenty of fun at the hazards, and came puffing up to the gymnasium together with reddened cheeks and tingling bodies to undergo the delights of a shower bath and a subsequent rubbing down that sent them to supper with the appetites of young bears.

But with the commencement of the spring term the walks were superseded by almost daily work on the track. The cross-country trips became regular events for the first and latter part of the week, and were varied in distance from time to time. Often Wayne was the only one of the "milers" or "half milers" to take the run; sometimes he was accompanied by Whitehead, a promising junior class youth; and less often the entire group of candidates were out. But whether the others were sent across the fields or not, Wayne was never allowed to miss a run.

"You see, Gordon," Professor Beck explained one day, "we have a way of classing fellows into three temperaments—the sanguine, the bilious, and the lymphatic; often the classification is difficult to make, but in your case it is extremely easy. You belong in the bilious class; constitution tough and capable of severe tasks and prolonged effort; circulation sluggish; disposition naturally persevering and ob—ahem!—inflexible; requires plenty of good food and

lots of exercise. You and Whitehead are the only distance men that I can rightly class as bilious; Whitehead is less so than you; there is also something of the sanguine in his make-up. So, my boy, that is why I keep you tussling with cross-country work while the others are on the track. No two men or boys, dogs or horses, require the same training in every particular. Your friend Cunningham is rather of a sanguine disposition; he's a brilliant performer at whatever he takes hold of; he can go over the one-hundred-and-twenty-yard hurdles in the finest form; but if he tried to take an oar in a two-mile boat race he would in all probability slump in his work before the race was won. The sanguine man is a man of dash and spirit, and is, as a rule, incapable of prolonged effort; he makes a good sprinter, but a poor long-distance runner."

"But Don is a good cross-country runner," objected Wayne.

"No, he's not; that is, he's a good cross-country runner for the reason that he is an excellent jumper and hurdler, and makes up by his speed over obstacles what he loses on the flat; but he's only a fair cross-country man because he is worn out at the end of the second mile; after that, to the finish, he has to depend on nerve and 'sand.' Two years ago he managed to finish second, how I scarcely know. This last fall, of the four men who finished first, three were distinctly of a bilious temperament, and one, Northrop, fairly lymphatic. Of course, to this, as to all other rules,

there are exceptions; but it's a rule that holds generally true. To the sanguine temperament we look for speed, to the bilious for endurance, to the lymphatic for nerve."

On the days when the cross-country run was not in order Wayne went with the other fellows to the track and practiced starting, and afterward ran varying distances on the cinders. The latter work Wayne liked, for, although he had not as yet been allowed to go over three fourths of a mile, and though Professor Beck had never yet told him what time he made, he felt that he was at last getting in touch with real work. Often he was one of a little bunch of half milers and milers, and there was a pleasurable intoxication in working past this runner or that, and, as sometimes happened, finishing well in the lead. Professor Beck's sole comments at the end of a performance of this sort was a brief "Well done, Gordon," or an almost equally laconic "Try to better that to-morrow."

But of criticism before and during the practice there was plenty. "Arms down, Gordon!" "That stride's too short; lengthen out! lengthen out!" "You're running too fast, Gordon. Ease up on this lap." "Put your head back so you can breathe, and, for goodness' sake, *keep your arms down!*"

But the latter injunction seemed to be always wasted. Try as he would—and he did try—Wayne's arms could not be made to hang; they always, sooner or later, got glued to his breast, making him look—so Don said—as though he

had a pain. Professor Beck reprimanded and scowled and growled, but to no purpose. Wayne replied that he could run better with his arms against his body, and he didn't see what difference it made. Professor Beck explained all over again that his lungs ought to have free play and that by keeping his arms and shoulders back they were unrestricted.

"But I'm more comfortable that way," Wayne pleaded. And the professor would smile in exasperation and beg him to try the other way "if you *please*, Gordon!" And Wayne would promise and forthwith try, and in the middle of a two-third-mile run discover to his amazement that his clinched hands were as tightly glued to his chest as ever!

But aside from this defection Wayne's performance was promising and Don was delighted. "You'll make the team sure," he declared. "And if you do you're almost certain of a first or second place. Neither St. Eustace nor Warrenton has a first-class miler. You and young Whitehead, and possibly Banks, will make a good trio."

But if running on the cinder track pleased Wayne the daily practice at starting equally displeased him. It was exasperating and tiresome work, but there was a good fifteen minutes of it every afternoon, and Wayne had a lot to learn. In squads of four or five the runners and jumpers were placed at the mark and sent off at the report of a pistol. The sprinters and hurdlers were instructed in the crouching, and the long-distance men and the jumpers in the standing start. Time and again Wayne, with his left foot

on the mark, his body thrown forward, and his ears straining for the report of the pistol in Professor Beck's hand, would for a single instant relax his vigilance, when—*bang!* and off would go the rest of the squad a good yard or more ahead of him! And when they all came trotting back for another try Professor Beck would inquire politely:

"Asleep, Gordon?"

Perhaps on the next attempt, mindful of his previous error, Wayne would offend in the opposite direction and start with a wild plunge down the track only to realize that the pistol report which he had seemed to hear was only a thing of imagination born of strained nerves and muscles. Then he would crawl shamefacedly back to meet the grins of the other chaps and to hear Professor Beck remark pleasantly:

"I see you've woke up, Gordon."

But there was one thing that acted as a solace: a good start was always applauded by the professor; perhaps in only two words, but worth to the boy whole sentences of praise or compliment. And, besides, his work was not so hard as that of the sprinters, who were forced to crouch like monkeys or cats—Wayne was never able to decide which they most resembled—for long seconds at a time, only to have the signal come when they had shifted their weight for a second from legs to arms, and to either leave them dazed on their mark or to send them sprawling on the cinders. That, at least, was spared him. He was not the

only one of the many candidates for track honors that made a muddle of starting, but, as Don cheerfully told him after a specially disastrous afternoon, "there was no other fellow in the lot who could start wrong and do it with such infinite variety."

But Don was often sorely tried and perplexed in those days of early training, and the unnecessary candor of the remark may be forgiven him. Don had his own training to go through with, and was besides compelled to take an active part in the training of others. The hurdlers and jumpers in especial were under his instruction, while, nominally at least, he was responsible for the proper work of all the candidates. Dave alone appeared undisturbed by events. At least four times a week he practiced with the hammer, Professor Beck viewing his performances with scarce concealed displeasure. For Dave's hammer throwing did not improve as the season wore on. Of the two other aspirants for success at the sport, one, Hardy, had already equaled Dave's best throw that spring; and the other, Kendall, gave promise of speedily attaining a like degree of proficiency. But Dave did not believe in worrying; he only tried his best, put every scrap of strength into his efforts, tossed the twelve-pound ball and wire away over the grass as though it were the veriest plaything, and then exhibited neither surprise nor disappointment when measurement revealed the fact that once again he had failed to equal his own not overgood record made in the inter-

scholastic meet the year before. Instead of fretting Dave worked the harder, and if honest endeavor deserves reward Dave should have captured the championship.

Week after week of good, bright weather, sometimes brisk with north winds, but never disagreeable, came and went. Wayne ran one-hundred-yard dashes, trotted slow miles, sped over moderate three quarters—always with a jolly sprint for the last forty or fifty yards—went jogging across country over fences, hedges, and brooks, put in a bad quarter of an hour in front of the starter's pistol, occasionally had a whole day of rest, and every night settled down to his studies with a cool, clear brain and a splendid absence of nerves. And one day the entries for the spring handicap meeting were posted and all the candidates for athletic honors went at their training harder than ever.

CHAPTER XVIII

DON LOSES HIS TEMPER

"Connor, you and Middleton will try the full flight together. Get on your mark, and I'll start you in a minute. Perkins, you took the full distance yesterday, didn't you? Well, report to Mr. Beck, please, for starting; and you'd better go a hundred and twenty on the flat at about a sixteen-second clip. Hello, Wayne, aren't you working today?"

Wayne suited his step to Don's and trotted up the track with him to where Connor and Middleton were waiting at the far end of the long line of hurdles.

"I guess so; after a while. Beck's busy with the broad jumpers. Are you going over the hurdles?"

"If I get a chance. Hang it, I haven't had any time to practice this week. Connor and Middleton have taken up every minute, and they're awful duffers at hurdling. Perkins is a good man, though; he just passed you a minute ago. Wait until I get these fellows off and I'll talk to you."

Don went to the starting line and Wayne, drawing his

coat more closely about his running costume, perched himself on an unused hurdle at the side of the track and looked on. Don took a small revolver from his pocket and stationed himself behind the two hurdlers.

"Both you fellows must try and get over the hurdles lower. Remember that it doesn't matter if you strike them; it won't hurt you. Connor, you start well and make your first hurdle all right, but after that you get ragged. Keep your pace up to the end; you ought to finish just as fast as you begin. Middleton, you haven't got your pace right yet. Your first two steps are always too short, and the result is that your third leaves you too far from the hurdle. You must correct that. I'll give you both two tries over the full flight. This time take it easy and be careful. On your mark! Set!"

Bang! went the little pistol and the two hurdlers dashed forward toward the first of the three-feet-six-inch obstacles. Don ran alongside on the cinders, watching their performance and shouting instructions.

"Higher next time, Connor, by a half inch." "Lengthen your stride, Middleton." "Take your time, both of you." "That's better, Connor; good work. Don't stop; keep on to the finish!"

The three hurdlers came slowly back, listening in patient and respectful attention to Don's criticisms, and again dug their spikes into the cinders at the mark, crouching low and practicing little starts. Don called to Wayne.

"I'm going over them once, Wayne, to show these chaps what I've been talking about. Will you start me?"

Wayne hurried up and took the pistol.

"You fellows," continued Don, turning to the two tyros, "had better run along and watch me over the hurdles. You'll see what I mean by jumping low, and you, Middleton, had better watch my stride. All ready, Wayne."

The latter cocked the pistol. "On your mark! Set!"

At the report of the pistol Don straightened himself quickly from his crouching position and tore lightly down on the first of the ten hurdles, springing off the right foot, turning his body slightly to the right and clearing the bar with a long, low, graceful rise that was scarcely more than a stride. Three long steps and he was again in the air, his rear ankle just tipping the wood as he landed on the ball of his right foot and sped on, apparently without effort. Again and again his white-clad form rose and fell down the line of hurdles until the last one was surmounted and he had crossed the finish running like a deer, swiftly and lightly. Then with a series of high, shortening strides he gradually slowed down and turned back.

"Isn't it pretty, the way he does that?" said a voice in Wayne's ear, and the latter turned to find Paddy beside him.

"You bet it is!" answered Wayne warmly. "I wish I could do it!"

"Ever try?"

"No; did you?"

"Once; last year. Don had five hurdles set up out here, and I told him I'd beat him over if he'd give me a start. So I tried. He waited until I was over the first hurdle. Then he started." Paddy paused and grinned reminiscently.

"Who won?"

"There wasn't any race, me boy. The spalpeen went across the finish while I was trying to pick myself out of the third hurdle. You see, I got over the first all right, but when I reached the second there was something wrong; I had too many feet or—or something; and I got there on the wrong one. I finally jumped off one of them—I think it was the left hind foot—knocked the hurdle over, ran for the next one, landed on top of it, and then—well, then the hurdle and I were all mixed up together. I think it struck me, but I'm not sure. Oh, hurdle racing is something that I wasn't cut out for. I'm quite willing that Don should do my share."

Don and the other two lads came up while Wayne was still laughing over Paddy's narrative, and, yielding the pistol, Wayne stood aside and watched the next trial. Don got into his overcoat again and Connor and Middleton crouched at the mark.

"Now, see what you can do," said Don. "I'll tell you frankly that neither of you can make the team on such work as you've done up to date. So, for goodness'

sake, put brains into your hurdling. I'll time you this try, and the fellow that finishes second will have to work hard next week if he wants to go to the interscholastic meeting."

Once more the pistol sounded, the two boys left the mark as though shot from a cannon, and together took the first two bars. Then Middleton began to drop behind, and at the last hurdle was a long two yards to the rear of Connor, who finished well and strongly.

"Nineteen and a fifth," called Don. "Slow work that. But you both showed improvement. Your stride's all wrong yet, though, Middleton; two short at first; nothing even; you'll get beaten every time until you mend it. I won't try you over the full flight again until you've had a full week's work learning the stride. Monday you'd better go back to the low hurdles again and try taking about three of them. That's all to-day."

Middleton and Connor, the former looking very meek, seized their wraps and trotted away toward the dressing room. Don joined Wayne and Paddy on the top of the hurdle and the three swung their legs and chatted until Professor Beck approached and summoned Wayne to the starting line of the mile.

It was Saturday afternoon, a week from the date of the handicap meeting, and the track candidates were out in full force. Groups of white-clad boys dotted the field. The broad jumpers and the pole vaulters were busy near by;

several sprinters were trotting toward the grand stand after their trials; the hammer and shot candidates were hard at work; a number of fellows were jogging about the track; on the gridiron the spring football squad was learning the rudiments of the game, and the sound of the bat broke sharply on the air now and then where the baseball candidates were at practice. On the links a number of figures moved hither and thither at the will of the speeding white spheres. The scene was a bright and busy one, and overhead the blue April sky arched cloudless from hill to mountain.

"Gordon, get your coat off and limber up," commanded Professor Beck. "I want you to run your distance to-day on time."

Wayne threw aside his coat, looked to his running shoes, and trotted down the cinders to the one-hundred-yard post and back again, stretching his muscles and relishing the faint gritting sound that his shoes made on the smooth, level path. Then he got on his mark and listened to the professor's directions.

"I'll tell you your time after each quarter," he announced. "I want you to study it and your pace so that you will be able in a race to judge accurately how fast you are going. Get away quickly and get a good steady pace by the end of the first sixty yards. Remember you've got a quarter of a mile farther to run than you're used to. And remember, too, that on the last half lap you must increase

your speed. Keep that in mind and save enough strength for a good hard spurt at the finish. Sutton will pace you on the last quarter. On your mark!"

Wayne sped away from a good start, and, according to directions, found a steady pace ere the end of the first half minute, and ran in good form. At the end of the first quarter Professor Beck announced the time and bade him to slow up a little. The half mile was accomplished well under 2.28. When he reached the line at the end of the third quarter Sutton was waiting and started off beside him at a pace that made Wayne's eyes open. But he did not try to overhaul the fleet-footed four-hundred-and-forty-yard runner at once, but ran well within himself and saved his strength for the last half lap. He began to feel the pace now, and his feet showed a tendency to drag. As he passed the line on the next to the last lap some twenty yards behind the middle-distance man Professor Beck was waiting watch in hand.

"All right," he called. "Don't hurry until you turn for the finish."

Around the track for the last time the two runners went. Sutton increased his pace and his lead about halfway down the back stretch. Overcoming the impulse to try and run him down then, Wayne kept up his steady, moderate pace until the turn toward the finish. Then he called on his reserve strength and spurted forward, making a fine race to the tape and finishing well up behind the

speedy Sutton. As he trotted back to the line Professor Beck met him.

"Your time was five minutes and twenty seconds, Gordon. Try and remember your speed, so that next time you will be able to regulate your pace by to-day's performance. You kept your arms up as usual and your second quarter was a bit too fast. Next time try and run it about five seconds slower, and put that five seconds into the finish. I expect you to cut that time down by at least fifteen seconds before the meet. That's all this afternoon. Work yourself easy the first of next week; I think I'd leave out the cross-country run Monday and do about two miles slow on the track. I'll give you another trial on Thursday."

Wayne trotted away to the gymnasium, had a refreshing shower and rub down, and had done a full hour's work at his studies when Don came in at dusk. The latter was not satisfied with his chum's performance.

"You'll have to beat that, Wayne. Sturgis, of St. Eustace, ran the mile last year easily in 5.02$\frac{1}{5}$," he said. "And Warrenton has men that can do nearly as well. But it's early yet. I do wish you'd get out of the habit of hugging yourself. I watched you this afternoon. You had your hands over your lungs during the whole last half of the mile."

"Hang it," Wayne responded, "you and Beck are awful cranks! I tell you that I can run better that way. I've tried letting my arms swing, and it won't work."

"No one wants you to swing your arms," answered Don. "Just let them alone and they'll look after themselves. Only, for goodness' sake stop putting them on your chest and loading your lungs down!"

"I don't load my lungs down," answered Wayne a trifle shortly. "My lungs are all right. I had plenty of breath when I finished to-day to run another mile."

"All right; but you wait and see, my boy. Folks that have been at the business longer than you know more about it, I guess; and you'll discover some fine day that you've just thrown away your chances of doing something by sticking to a habit that you could easily break yourself of now if you'd try."

"I have tried; I can't run any other way."

"You haven't tried hard enough. It's nonsense to say that you *can't* keep your arms off your chest; you just *won't!*"

Wayne retired behind his Cæsar in silent dignity, and Don, his temper worn by the day's labor with the hurdlers and jumpers, isolated himself in his window seat and scowled over his history of Greece until hunger drove both to supper, by which time the small quarrel was forgotten and the two raced downstairs and across to Turner Hall in the best of spirits.

CHAPTER XIX

THE HOME RUN

Events were crowded thickly into the next week. Gardiner returned to the Academy on Monday and shook up football affairs in a way that surprised even Paddy. On Tuesday two more graduates put in an appearance on the campus and with most terrifying scowls proceeded to work miracles, one with the sprinters and the other with the baseball candidates. The latter coach reached the scene none too soon, for the next day Shrewsburg sent down an aggregation of hard-hitting young gentlemen who had already earned a reputation that reached up and down the valley. Most of the fellows turned out for the game and cheered lustily for the crimson-stockinged youngsters, but despite the support of the grand stand Hillton put up a ragged kind of ball, and at the end of the sixth inning the wearers of the green S were five runs to the good and their earning capacity seemed still unlimited.

Wayne and Don and Dave saw most of the contest from where the former was putting Perkins over the high hurdles in a fraction over record time. Later they adjourned to the

stand and Don took a hand in the cheering with encouraging results. Hillton went to bat in the first of the seventh amid a loud chorus of cheers only to retire in one-two-three order. Then the coach asserted authority and a new pitcher went into the box, a lower-middle-class boy, Forest by name, who had gained some success with his class nine the preceding spring. He had a fresh, smiling, and ingenuous countenance, and he delivered nice straight balls that went so fast that the first two Shrewsburg batters went out on strikes and the third one reached first base through the medium of a short grounder that seemed to belong to nobody in particular, and for which nobody tried. But the side was out in the next moment, for the fourth batsman struck up a nice clean fly that settled cosily into the right-fielder's hands, and the crimson stockings trotted in under a salvo of applause.

"Say, where's Paddy?" asked Wayne, while the first man at bat was recovering his equilibrium after striking unsuccessfully at a deceptive drop. Dave grinned.

"Paddy's busy. Gardiner's got every candidate, new and old, back of the gym teaching them to pass. And Gardiner's so full of new ideas that Paddy's head is in a whir all the time. I fear he'll have brain fever soon."

"There'll be two of us," said Don feelingly, "unless Middleton goes out of training. He knocked over every hurdle to-day except the last three. I don't understand how he came to miss those."

"Side's out," interrupted Wayne. "This is the last of the eighth, isn't it?"

"Yes, let's get the fellows to cheering." Don got up nd encouraged the stand to renewed efforts, and the Shrewsburg captain went to bat.

"Twelve to seven," muttered Dave. "I guess we don't want this game."

"Nine's awful rocky this year," said Don. "But I'll bet Kirk will teach 'em something before the first St. Eustace game."

"Good work, Gray!" yelled Wayne, as the Hillton first baseman captured a liner hot off the end of the Shrewsburg captain's stick.

"Is that Carl Gray?" asked Dave.

"Yes; I guess he'll get on to the team. He's made two of the seven runs so far."

Once more the Shrewsburg batters failed to make a safe hit, and Forest got a good hearty cheer all to himself as he threw down the ball and went to the bench. It was the first of the ninth now and the home team's last chance to tie the score or win, either a difficult task. But the cheering became continuous, and the first man at bat, obeying instructions, waited patiently for his base and got it on four balls. Then a batting streak came to the Hillton players, and the next fellow at the plate struck the first ball delivered safely just inside of the third baseman. The next batter also found the ball and knocked it hotly to shortstop,

who fumbled it; and the bases were full. But the Shrewsburg pitcher settled down to work and the following Hillton man went out on strikes. And then happened a most unfortunate incident for Shrewsburg. The coachers were busy back of first and third bases, and the Shrewsburg pitcher allowed the noise to worry him a little, just enough to turn an inshoot into a catastrophe. The ball struck the batsman on the hip, and he limped to first, the men on bases moved up, and Hillton scored her eighth run, amid quickly suppressed applause from the seats. The pitcher lost his nerve then and delivered a straight ball, shoulder high, which lit on the center of the bat and went sailing just over his head, bringing another runner in and reaching first too late to put the batsman out. The bases were still full, with but one out, and the grand stand was wild with excitement. The next fellow at the plate, perhaps determining to profit by the pitcher's collapse, allowed the first two balls to go by unnoticed. Both were strikes. He looked worried for an instant as he tapped the plate with his stick and again faced the pitcher. The third delivery was a ball, and the batsman smiled.

"Hit it, Jim!" shrieked a friend in the audience, but Jim merely broadened his smile into a grin, and the umpire called "Two balls!" Again he remained motionless. "Three balls!" Fellows on the seats began to breathe hard and lean restively forward. The Shrewsburg pitcher glanced around the bases, wiped the stained leather sphere

pensively on his gray trousers, shot his hands upward, and sent a straight ball waist-high over the plate. The batsman tossed aside his stick and took a step toward first base.

"Striker's out!" called the umpire.

A howl of derision went up from the watchers as the youth turned back and walked toward the seat with a pained expression on his face. "Idiot!" commented Dave.

But there was yet a chance. A three-bagger would tie the score. A slightly built boy selected a bat and took his place at the plate. Simultaneously the pitcher turned, waved his hand, and the fielders scattered farther away. Some one started a cheer.

"'Rah-rah-rah, 'Rah-rah-rah, 'Rah-rah-rah, Gray!"

"There's your friend, Wayne," said Dave. "Hope he'll swipe out a home run."

"So do I. But no such luck, I'm afraid."

The pitcher was evidently afraid of Gray's prowess with the bat and went to work skillfully to deceive him by all his arts. But Gray was cool and used the best of judgment. The first ball sped slowly by and resolved itself into a wide outcurve. "One ball!" droned the umpire. The catcher protested loudly, indignantly. Then he marched forward and held a whispered conversation with the pitcher, while the audience laughed derisively.

"No secrets!" bawled a small junior.

The catcher returned, and, leaning far to the right, smote his glove disconcertingly. But Gray refused to

glance around or lose his head. The pitcher's wonted skill and coolness had returned to him. The men on bases were playing far off, ready to take advantage of anything in the shape of a hit. Up went the pitcher's hands, forward shot his arm, and Gray leaped desperately backward.

"Strike!" called the umpire.

Gray looked disconcerted for an instant. Then he tapped the plate resolutely and again faced the pitcher. The next ball was far out and the boy at bat made no offer at it.

"Two balls!"

Again the chap with the great green S decorating his jersey went through his contortions, and the sphere sped forward. Gray struck at it with all his force and spun around on his heel. The catcher dropped to his knee and picked the ball from the dust. It was a most deceptive drop and the waiting batsmen on the bench nodded their heads in approval.

"Two strikes!"

A little spot of deeper red shone on Gray's cheek now and he moved his stick a bit nervously behind his shoulder. The pitcher stepped back into his box, nodded to a sign from the catcher, and let drive. Then there was a sharp report as Gray's bat struck the speeding sphere, the grand stand was on its feet, the three men on bases raced home almost in a bunch, and Gray was rounding first base at a desperate pace!

High and far sped the ball. The left-fielder was racing back down the field. Would he catch it? Pandemonium reigned in the grand stand. Wayne and the others were on their feet, shouting wildly and waving their caps. Gray reached second base, cast a glance toward left field, and came on. The fielder turned almost under the ball and reached upward, leaped back a step, clutched wildly, and fell. The ball, tipping his fingers just beyond his reach, dropped to earth. And Gray, panting and happy, crossed the home plate into the arms of his exultant friends.

The score was now in Hillton's favor by one run: thirteen to twelve. The half was soon over. The next man struck a short grounder and was out at first. And Shrewsburg went to bat, desperate resolve written large on every face.

"Say, that friend Gray of yours is a great little boy!" exclaimed Dave, as he pulled his cap on again and pounded his feet in time to the refrain of Hilltonians, which the audience had started to chant.

"That's the finest home run that's ever been seen on this field since I've been in school," said Don. "And it was needed, too. A home run in time saves the nine."

"I hope it'll save this nine," laughed Wayne. "But those chaps look as though they meant business. One run will tie us; two will beat us."

But fortune proved a friend to Hillton, and Gray's wonderful hit saved the day, for Forest worked like a veteran

pitcher and struck out the first two Shrewsburg men in short order. The next batter wrote finis to the game by sending a high foul into the first baseman's gloves, and the grand stand was emptied of its throng. Shrewsburg accepted defeat manfully, answered the Hillton cheer with one equally hearty, bundled itself into the waiting coach, and took its departure with much good-natured defiant flaunting of green banners. Gray, by one brilliant stroke, had achieved a much-coveted position on the nine and was a school hero for many weeks.

The following day Wayne again sped over the mile while Professor Beck held the watch on him. But something was wrong. The professor gave him the result with ill-concealed displeasure.

"Five minutes twenty-three seconds. That'll never do. You must cut off fifteen seconds, Gordon, if you expect to make the team. What's the trouble?"

But Wayne couldn't tell. He had done his best, he thought, and asserted positively that he could run the distance again without feeling it, which feat was naturally not allowed.

"Take a rest to-morrow," counseled the professor, "so that you'll be in good condition for Saturday. For I'll tell you frankly that if you don't mend that time in the handicaps you'll find yourself out of it."

And Wayne jogged back to the gymnasium feeling very forlorn and discouraged. But after his bath and rubbing

his spirits returned and he vowed to open the professor's eyes next time. He had entered for both the half and the mile, the former on Professor Beck's advice. "For," said the latter, "the races are far apart, and you'll get over the effects of the half before the mile is called. And the half may limber you up for the longer distance."

Wayne spent the next day in rest. Don, too, was idle, as were most of the boys who were to participate in the handicaps, and he and Wayne took a short walk along the river in the afternoon and returned at dusk in time for an hour's study before supper. The handicaps were announced that evening, and, as is usual in like cases, there was some dissatisfaction expressed by contestants. Wayne found that he was to be allowed twenty yards in the half mile and was to run from scratch in the mile, and was quite satisfied. One thing that told its own story was the announcement that Merton would receive an allowance of eight feet in the hammer throw.

"Poor old Dave!" said Don. "That'll cut him up like anything. I suppose it means that Hardy has turned out to be a better man, for you see he's down for scratch. Hello! they've given Middleton four seconds in the one-hundred-and-twenty-yard hurdles; well, he ought to come somewhere near winning with that allowance."

Wayne went to bed that night filled with determination to win on the morrow. He was not the sort of lad that allows the thought of coming events to keep him awake,

and he was soon fast asleep; nerves were practically unknown to Wayne. But his brain proved more troublesome and continued its labors after the body had gone to rest, with the result that his slumbers were disturbed by dreams in which he seemed to be trying to win the mile race with Professor Beck perched like an old man of the sea on his shoulders, and Don continually thrusting hurdles in his path.

CHAPTER XX

BADLY BEATEN

Saturday dawned fresh and clear. A little breeze, redolent of forest depths and growing things, blew over the meadows from Mount Adam. The river sparkled beneath its touch and the broad carpet of yellowish green marshland beyond felt its breath and stirred in response. The school turned out to a man—or should I say to a boy?—and long before the hour set for the meeting the stand and much of the turf without the ropes that guarded the track in the vicinity of the finish lines were well thronged. The village came too, in the persons of the postmaster and the livery-stable keeper and the two rival grocers and many others of local prominence; and their wives and daughters came with them and lent an added dash of color to the scene.

The meeting was much like every other event of the kind. Contestants ran, hurdled, or jumped; the judges looked inscrutable; and the audience cheered indiscriminately. It was little to them whether this boy was disappointed or that one made glad; they applauded a bril-

liant finish or an extra inch surmounted with the pole, and cared but little what the figures might be. There were no records broken that day, but Professor Beck and Don and the coaches—of which there was a small army on hand, many having arrived on the morning train—were on the whole well satisfied with the results shown. Don took both hurdle events, and Perkins came in a close second. Middleton failed to use his allowance to good effect, and made a poor third in each race. Dave threw the hammer one hundred and thirty-eight feet four inches, which, with his handicap of eight feet, gave him second place in the event. Hardy threw one hundred and forty-seven feet two inches, and Kendall was third with one hundred and forty feet nine inches. Hardy's performance assured him a place on the team and indicated a possibility of victory at the forthcoming meeting. The pole vault, the sprints, the jumps, and the quarter mile were all well contested, and some of them showed even brilliant work. Whitehead ran away from the field in the last twenty yards of the half mile, and Wayne finished a poor sixth, partly owing to the fact that he had made a bad start and partly because the pace was too hot for him; Whitehead's time was 2.07⅕.

After such a sorry showing as that it seemed that Fortune owed Wayne some reparation in the mile event; if so, Fortune didn't pay the debt. Profiting by the experience gained in the half mile, Wayne got off well with the pistol and took a place in the van of the group of eight

runners. At the quarter mile he was third and felt as fresh as a colt; at the half he had pulled himself up to a place on the inside of the track and but a yard behind the leader. At the three quarters he was still running strong, but Whitehead had passed him and was disputing the lead with Battles. At the beginning of the last lap, Wayne found himself fourth. On the back stretch he passed Seers and drew up behind Whitehead and Battles. His legs were strong, his breath good, and he could have run another mile without minding it. But after the turn, when he dashed ahead to win, he found to his dismay that there was no dash in him. Battles and Whitehead tore away from him and Seers crawled up, hung for an instant on his flank, and passed him. Battles won first by a fraction of a second, Whitehead was next, Seers third, and Wayne fourth. The winner's time was 5.03⅘; Wayne's, 5.19.

He crawled dejectedly to the dressing room and refused to be comforted by Whitehead's predictions of better success next time. He was out of it, and he knew it. There was nothing to do save put as good a face as possible upon defeat. He trotted away to the gymnasium before the meeting was quite over and took his bath and rub down almost alone. To-day these things failed to summon back his spirits, and he went to his room, perched himself on his own particular window seat, gazed out across the sunlit river and marshes, and thought it all over.

It seemed hard luck. A few months before he would

have cared but little whether he made the track team or not. But now it was different. The virus of athletic ambition was in his veins, and the afternoon's defeat, entailing as it did loss of position on the track team, seemed magnified into an overwhelming catastrophe. He tried to summon back the old indifference; he remembered scoffing at Don because the latter made so much of athletic triumphs; somehow it was different to-day, and he wished that he had resisted Don's appeals and stayed out of it all. Then a sense of injury overwhelmed him. What right had Don and Professor Beck to encourage him as they had into thinking that the long hard training would win him a place on the team and then to drop him like a—like a hot penny because he had failed once or twice to come up to their standard? He was so certain all the time that he could have won if—if—what? What had been the trouble? He knit his brows and stared hard across the river. He had had no trouble as to wind; his legs had remained strong and tireless to the end; he had simply been unable to run as fast at the finish as the others. Very well, then, it only remained to learn how to save his strength so that he could spurt hard in the last fifty yards. Why couldn't they give him another chance? In the midst of his musings Don came in. He tossed a pair of grips on to the table and joined Wayne at the window. There was an atmosphere of constraint in the study, and for a moment neither boy spoke. Then Don broke the silence.

"I'm awfully sorry, Wayne."

"Well, I suppose it doesn't matter."

There was another interval of silence. Then Don broke out with:

"But it does matter! I feel all broke up over it! It's too bad, old chap; that's what it is. But perhaps it isn't all up yet. I'm going to try and get Beck to give you another try, Wayne. Don't you think you can do better?"

"Yes, I *know* I can. I could have won easily to-day if—if— The trouble was I didn't have any speed left at the finish; even Seers passed me! Can't I learn to save up for a spurt? I wasn't tired; I could have run another mile, I'm sure, Don."

"Of course you can learn, if—if there is only time. You see, old chap, there is only three weeks left. But I am going to see Beck, and I'll do all I can. I feel certain that you can beat that time to-day, and better it, too. There has been a mistake somewhere; you haven't been worked right. And it's Beck's fault, I guess; at any rate, it isn't yours."

"Oh, it's nobody's fault, I reckon; it's just rotten luck!"

"No, luck doesn't enter into it, Wayne. There's been a mistake somewhere; and I hope Beck will see it." He paused and looked in a troubled way at his chum. "Perhaps you think it is my fault, Wayne?" he said wistfully. Wayne shook his head.

"No. I was rather blaming you and Beck a while ago, but I had no right to. It isn't your fault at all, Don, and don't you worry about me; you've got enough to attend to. I'll be all right. Only if you don't mind speaking to Beck about it, you know——"

"Of course I will. Right away, too. All the fellows are asked to report in Society House this evening at eight. Beck is going to announce the names of the fellows who are to go to training table Monday, and some of the grads are going to talk a bit. Remsen came to-day."

"Who's Remsen; the football man?"

"Yes, he used to coach the eleven. He's a jolly nice fellow, and awfully popular here. He'll probably talk some, too. I hope he does; he's worth hearing. You'll go, won't you?"

"If I'm wanted; though, if I'm not going to be on the team, I don't see what use——"

"Of course you're going on! So shut up and keep chipper. I promised Beck to go to his room at five, and it's nearly that time. Don't get blue, old chap; we'll fix it all right!"

When the door had slammed to after Don the boy at the window sat a long while looking out on to the darkening landscape. The river grew to a deep violet with steel-gray ripples. The marsh became filled with shadows, and the sun dropped behind the purple hills and left the twilight cold and colorless. With a sigh and a shake of his

broad shoulders Wayne jumped up, pulled down the shades, and lighted the gas. He seized the first book that came to hand, a Greek Testament, and settled himself resolutely in the armchair.

"If Beck won't give me another show," he muttered as he found his place, "I'll go ahead and train on my own hook. And I'll cut that old mile down to five minutes even if I have to work all day. And then they'll *have* to take me on!"

CHAPTER XXI

REMSEN'S PLEDGE

The tiny hall in Society House was crowded when Wayne and Don entered at a little before eight. All the candidates for the track team, the crew, the football team, and the baseball nine were there, and a group of five graduates were talking together by the stage. At the latter Wayne looked with some curiosity. Gardiner topped them all by half a head. Kirk, the old baseball player, looked like a pygmy beside him. Don pointed out the others: Barret, the renowned hurdler; Burns, once a famous sprinter; and Kenyon, holder of the intercollegiate two-hundred-and-twenty-yard record. Paddy joined them and the three found seats near the front. Then Dave entered and squeezed into a three-inch space between Wayne and Paddy.

"How'd they go, Dave?" asked Don.

"Rotten; I can't throw a hammer. I used to think I could, but——" He shook his head sadly.

"Go on wid yer," said Paddy. "Yez kin bate thim all if yez 'ud only think so.—But what in the name of good-

ness was the matter with you to-day?" he asked, turning to Wayne. Wayne smiled cheerfully and shook his head.

"Blest if I know, Paddy. I guess I'm like Dave; I used to think I could run, but——" He shook his head in mimicry of Dave and wiped an imaginary tear from his eye.

"Well, you're all a sorry lot," said Paddy in disgust. "All except Don, and he can't help winning, hang him!" Further compliments were interrupted by the appearance of Professor Beck and the former football coach, Stephen Remsen. Paddy jumped to his feet.

"Now then, fellows," he cried, facing the hall, "three times three for Remsen!" The cheers were given with a will and the recipient bowed his thanks smilingly. Then Professor Beck took the platform, and, after a few words of criticism on the day's events, read the training table list. Sixteen fellows were selected to go to "Mother" Burke's in the village, and twelve were named for a table in the school dining room. Wayne's name was on neither list and he shot an inquiring glance at Don. The latter whispered:

"It's all right. You'll go to table later."

Two of the graduates, fine, healthy-looking men, took their turns after the professor and pointed out some defects in the afternoon's performances, spoke encouragingly to the fellows, and were cheered as they took their seats. Then Remsen arose and the little audience became on the instant as quiet as though made up of so many wax figures. Remsen was more than a Hillton graduate, more than a success-

ful coach; he was a sort of school deity whom successive classes had long worshiped. In his school days he had been stroke in a winning crew, had excelled with the weights, and had been captain of the football eleven when it had devastated the surrounding country of laurels. These things are enough to place a man's name high on the roster of fame and to earn him gratitude. But besides this Remsen had been football coach for three years, during which time the team had won two victories from and played a tie with St. Eustace; and always, ever since his graduation, he had labored unceasingly for the school and had done more than any other individual toward establishing its athletics on a firm, stable, and honest basis.

In appearance he was about thirty years of age, and "football man" was stamped all over his well-built frame. He was the kind of man for whom one would have predicted success in whatever undertaking he had entered. His face was handsome and manly; his eyes gray and clear; and his smile worth seeing. Hillton was proud of him, from its principal to its smallest junior, and he was proud of Hillton. When the fellows had stopped clapping he began to speak.

"I've been asked by your principal to say a few words to you this evening. I make this statement before I begin, so that if I bore you, you will know where to lay the blame. Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Barret have told you some things that it will be worth your while to remember and to profit by;

because they know just what they are talking about. But if I undertook to criticise what I saw this afternoon—aside from the work of the fellows who scattered the hammers and shots around—I should be out of my depth; I wouldn't know a hurdle from a stop-watch if I met them together. What little I know about weights I am willing to talk about. But I'll do that to-morrow, when I hope to meet the weight men on the campus. And as to football, why, if there is anything that Mr. Gardiner has forgotten to say I'll be glad to say it before I leave.

"To-night I should like to say a few words about training and athletics in general. I am glad to see so much interest displayed in the approaching interscholastic meeting. I hope we'll win it. We've lost it with good grace for two years past; I think we could win it with even better grace. But if we don't come out on top this spring, why, I'm sure that we can give the other schools some points in the art of losing. It's a great thing to be able to lose well; much greater than being able to win well. I think we do both well here at Hillton, but there may be room for improvement; there usually is everywhere. It's fine to win. I'd rather win any day than to lose. But I don't always manage it. And it's got to be the same way with a track team or a football eleven or a crew. Sometimes it has got to come in second; perhaps third. If no crew was willing to accept second place there wouldn't be any races, and soon there wouldn't be any crews.

"I have a youngster at home; he isn't very big yet—just put on his first pair of trousers the other day—but he looks a good deal like a football man already. Some day I expect he'll come here to school. If he does I hope he will row on the crew and play on the eleven or the nine, and, if he can, run well or leap the hurdles. But if I had my way I'd fix his victories and defeats for him in about a proportion of one victory to nine defeats. For it isn't winning that helps a fellow get a good hard grip on the world, but losing. Yes, fellows, a boy or a man will learn more wisdom—good, useful, every-day wisdom—in one defeat than he will in nine victories. It would be a hard course for Remsen, Jr., but it would make a better man out of him in the end than would a whole eight years of first prizes. So don't despise defeat, as long as it is honorable. Learn to make the most of it. Don't feel down-hearted for more than two minutes and a half; that's quite long enough for regrets. Cheer the victors, and go back and try again. Don't blame the other man because he won—it was probably your own fault; but shake hands with him and, if you must, tell him to look out for his laurels next time. Defeat ought to teach us courage, perseverance, manliness, good temper, and self-possession—all good things to learn. As I look back on my school and college days I can remember occasions when I won bigger victories through defeat than when I rowed in a winning crew or played on a winning team.

"But that's enough about losing. You'll think that I'm a bird of ill omen, I'm afraid. So let's talk about something else. I wonder how many of you fellows realize the fact that all the hard work and training you have gone through with and are still undergoing is not, after all, a preparation toward winning a track meeting or a boat race? Did you ever stop to ask yourselves what the right aim of athletics is—what the chief aim should be? Some of you will answer: 'That's easy; the chief aim of athletics is winning.' Wrong; the true aim of all athletics, the world around, is physical culture. Winning is of small importance; contests are only incentives. We go in for athletics because we wish to attain to a condition of physical fitness that will allow us to make the most of our lives. Athletics without training is useless; it will accomplish almost nothing good. I use the word training here in its fullest meaning: moderation in diet and exercise, temperance and regularity in daily life, cleanliness and self-restraint. We train in order that the actual athletics will benefit us. I might go through the most approved course of chest-weight and dumb-bell exercise, but if, as soon as it was over, I went to the table and stuffed my stomach full of indigestible food, drank a lot of liquor, smoked a lot of cigarettes or cigars, stayed up every night until one or two o'clock, took no outdoor exercise and breathed impure air all day, why, I might as well let the chest weights alone so far as any benefit is concerned. Athletics require training, whether we are going

to compete in sports or not; and training means power to perform hard tasks with a modicum of fatigue and often with enjoyment; it enables the body to endure hardships, heat, cold, or fasting, without becoming endangered, and it clears the cobwebs out of the brain.

"Unusual strains without previous preparation will often prove injurious. Training prepares us for those strains; our ability to meet them increases as the training advances. The best training is that which trains all parts of the body in unison. Don't allow your exercise to develop one physical portion of your body at the cost of any other; because you are going to throw weights don't neglect your leg muscles; because you are going to try for the one-hundred-yard dash don't neglect your arms. In short, avoid becoming a 'specialist' as much as possible. Keep in mind the fact that general health and not success at one feat is the end of athletic training.

"I'm doing a good deal more talking than I intended to, and I dare say I'm boring you badly, just as I feared I should. But there is one more thing that I want to touch on while I've got you where you can't get away, and that——"

"Go on! We like it!" shouted a boy at the back of the room; and the audience clapped and laughed its approval.

"Well, that's very good of you," Remsen continued smilingly. "But I'm about through. If I was—well, a kind of athletic dictator in this country, I should require

from every fellow a verbal signature to this pledge: 'I will always play fair!' It isn't a very long pledge, but it means a good deal, as you will see if you'll consider it. If every schoolboy, whether an athlete or a grind, and every college man would sign it and stick to it, we'd never hear of one school's having 'severed athletic relations' with another; there'd be no brawling in football games, and we'd never see the charge of professionalism brought against a college. And it is a pledge that we need not leave behind us when we graduate; it's a good pledge to stick to right through life.

"I have no fault to find with Hillton athletes on the score of unfairness. I earnestly believe that athletics are pure here; but I'm not going to assume any 'holier than thou' attitude; and I hope you won't. Let us keep them as pure as we can and give an unobtrusive lesson to other schools —yes, and colleges. That's all I've got to say, fellows. I thank you for listening so kindly."

Ere the cheer had started Don was on his feet.

"Mr. Remsen," he cried, "won't you put that pledge to us? I'm sure every fellow here will sign it gladly."

A chorus of assent arose and much clapping. Remsen turned back to the audience and held up his hand.

"You've heard what Cunningham has said. Nothing would please me more than to have you all accept that pledge. Shall I put it to you?"

One deep, hearty "Yes" swept through the room.

"Very well. Suppose you take the pledge by rising. If there are any here who for any reason prefer not to pledge themselves I hope they will keep their seats without any embarrassment. There may be some here to-night who are so certain of their ability to always act rightly that they will not deem a pledge necessary. I shall think no less of those who decline to go through the form."

The speaker paused and looked about the hall, a smiling brightness in his gray eyes.

"Then after me, fellows, and rise. 'I will always play fair.'"

"I will always play fair." The response was earnest and hearty, and before the last word had died away every person in the hall was on his feet—graduates, Professor Beck, and all; not a person remained seated.

Stephen Remsen looked for a moment into the dozens of earnest faces before him. Then: "God send we can keep that pledge!" he said soberly.

Whereupon "Pigeon" Wallace leaped on to a chair and the cheering began.

CHAPTER XXII

DAVE IS MADE HAPPY

On Monday Wayne went to the track at three o'clock and found Professor Beck instructing the broad jumpers who were tearing up the newly turned loam with great gusto. A freckled-faced boy came hurtling through the air and plumped ankle-deep in the brown soil, and the professor held the end of the tape to the heel mark.

"Twenty-one feet seven and a half, Gaffney," he announced. "That will do for to-day. Take your run on the track, and don't let yourself get stiff." He moved the rake which he held over the loam, obliterating the marks, and turned to Wayne.

"Well, my boy, Cunningham tells me that you're not satisfied with Saturday's results. You think you can do considerably better if you keep on, do you?"

"Yes, sir, I'm sure of it."

"Very well. I'll tell you what we've decided to do. We'll go ahead as before, except that we'll give more attention to short distances, and a week from Wednesday I'll give you a trial over the mile. If you can do it in 5.15

we'll send you to training table, and if you continue to improve you'll go with the team. But first you've got to go around the track six times with your arms swinging; after you have got so that you can do that and do it with a decent amount of speed we'll go on. Does that satisfy you?"

"Yes, sir. May I run now?"

"As soon as you like."

Wayne threw aside his wraps and limbered up. In a few moments he trotted back.

"All ready, sir."

"Never mind the pistol; start yourself. I'll keep an eye on you." Wayne looked down threateningly at each hand, got on the mark and sprang away.

"Take it easy, Gordon," called the professor, "and remember those arms!"

The arms behaved nicely until Wayne fell to wondering how fast he was going; then they strode up to his breast and remained unnoticed for a hundred yards. After that the boy kept one eye on the track and one on his arms and finally finished the three quarters.

"Hard work, was it?" asked Professor Beck with a smile.

"Yes, sir, kind of. But it won't be so hard next time."

"All right. Get your coat on and keep moving for a while. Then try the starts with the others."

The next afternoon Wayne did a half mile in good time with his hands and arms where they belonged, and after

that for the rest of the week the training went on as theretofore, save that he was put over numerous short distances to develop his speed and substituted three-mile walks for the usual runs across country. He made progress almost at once; on Wednesday he covered the four hundred and forty yards in 0.56⅗, and began to consider himself something of a sprinter, even though the first man in the race reached the tape in 0.52⅕. He was on the track every day that week except Thursday and Saturday; on Thursday he was ordered off by Professor Beck and told to rest, and on Saturday he went over the road for a stiff walk with several other long-distance men.

It was while he was crossing the green to the gymnasium after that walk that Dave lumbered across the turf toward him, swinging his sweater excitedly around his head.

"One hundred and forty-six!" he yelled exultantly.

"Who? What?" asked Wayne.

"Me! The hammer!" answered Dave, smiting the other joyfully on the back with a force that nearly upset him. "I threw it!"

"Really? I'm awfully glad. How'd it happen?"

"Why, you see—well, I don't quite know. But Remsen's been coaching us every day since Monday, as you know. He's told me all along that there was something wrong with my swing, but he couldn't tell what. But today he grabbed the hammer away from me, told me to

watch it, and sent it spinning. Well, I noticed that he did one thing that I didn't: when he let go he gave a peculiar jerk to his body. Of course, I've known about it—they call it 'putting the devil into the swing'—but somehow I never could manage it right. But to-day I saw how it was done—it's in the way you manage your feet—and I yelled: 'I see, I see! Let me have it!' At first I couldn't do it at all. When I tried to bring my right foot round after the third swing I forgot to let go at the right moment. But the next time I did it, and threw a hundred and forty-two. Then Remsen swung again and I watched. And the next time I piled two feet six inches on to it; and the next throw was a hundred and forty-six and a fraction. I'd be throwing yet if Remsen hadn't taken the hammer away and sent me home." Dave laughed happily. "You wait until to-morrow, Wayne. Why, now that I've learned that little trick I bet I can beat Hardy by two feet!"

"Well, I'm awfully glad," said Wayne, "and I hope you will. Does Don know?"

"No; he and Beck went off together just before."

"Let's go up to the room; perhaps he's there."

They had finished their dressing by this time, and they piled upstairs and across the green to Bradley. Don was sitting at the table with a litter of papers before him, all the gas burning, and the afternoon twilight streaming in through the windows.

"Well, what——" began Wayne.

"Figuring our chances, my boy," answered Don, rumpling his hair with nervous fingers.

"How are they?" asked Dave eagerly.

"Slim, mighty slim. I can't see anything but defeat and a second place on the ticket."

"Let me see." Dave took up a sheet of foolscap and cast his eyes over it.

"Read it out," said Wayne.

"Well, let's see; here we are: Hillton, 4 firsts, 5 seconds, 1 third, total 36 points; St. Eustace, 6 firsts, 5 seconds, 1 third, total 46 points; others, 2 firsts, 2 seconds, 9 thirds, total 26 points. You seem to be fond of 6's, Don."

"What counts what?" asked Wayne.

"First counts 5, second 3, third 1. There are twelve events and 108 points," answered Don. "I've given Hillton everything she can win, and one first that is doubtful. Of course, St. Eustace may be stronger or weaker than I think. But, pshaw! the whole thing's just guess work; we may not score 20 points, or we may possibly get 40; you can never tell. But Beck wanted a guess at it."

"Well, I'll tell you where you can get five points more," said Dave. "You've credited us with second place in the hammer throw and St. Eustace with first. You can give us first and second both."

"How's that?" asked Don.

"Why, I've just thrown over one hundred and forty-six feet, and I can better it by two more in a couple of

days." And Dave retold his story. Don bit the end of his pencil thoughtfully; then he referred to a sheet of figures before him.

"I guess you're right, Dave. By Jove, I am glad! Trowbridge, of Northern Collegiate, threw one hundred and forty-eight feet five inches last year; Sumner, of St. Eustace, one hundred and forty-seven even. If you can throw two feet better than you did to-day, Dave, we'll stand a chance to beat St. Eustace, at least. Give me that list. There, that makes it—why, it makes St. Eustace and us each forty-one points!"

"Well, that's more than a fighting chance."

"Yes. But what's the good of figuring on track meetings? Any one of those other five schools might upset this whole table of figures."

"Yes, I suppose so. But let's hope for the best; it doesn't cost any more," answered Dave cheerfully. Don bundled away his papers, and, with the result of his labors in hand, went out with Dave on his way to Professor Beck's room. Left to himself, Wayne got his books together, drew a half-finished thesis toward him, and started to work. Presently he stopped and knit his brows. Then he chewed the end of his pen as an aid to memory, and at length went to the bookcase and turned over several volumes, apparently without finding the information he desired. At that moment a knock sounded and Carl Gray entered.

"Hello!" cried Wayne. "Say, Gray, when did the insurrection of Cylon take place?"

"Oh, about a couple of thousand years ago, I guess."

"But what year was it?"

"Well, let me see; 357 B. C., wasn't it? No; that was the war of the Athenian league. I guess I don't know, Gordon."

"Shucks! I'll have to go over to the library."

"Well, wait a minute and I'll go with you. I brought these up." He took a package from his pocket and laid it on the table; Wayne picked it up, and undoing the paper covering revealed a pair of new cork grips.

"They're for you," said Gray hurriedly. "I hope you'll use them when you win the mile at the interscholastic meet. They're not very well made; I had to use big stoppers, and they were sort of coarse grained."

"Why, they're simply immense," said Wayne. He took one in each hand and gripped his fingers about them. "I'm awfully much obliged. And of course I'll use 'em, whether I win or lose, Gray. But how in the world could you make 'em?"

"Oh, you just cut the cork out in sections and glue them over a piece of wood, you know. Then you shape it with a sharp knife and sort of polish it off with fine sandpaper or emery. It's easy enough, and I'm glad you like them."

"You bet I do! They're fine! Thanks, awfully."

"Gordon, I wish you weren't so full of thanks; you tire me to death!" said Gray, trying to mimic Wayne's manner. Wayne grinned.

"Now we're even. Come over to the library with me."

"No," said Gray, as they went downstairs, "we're not even. And we sha'n't be for a long time. And that reminds me." He pulled a coin out of his pocket and handed it to Wayne. "I sha'n't be here a week from Saturday, you know; we go to Marshall to play St. Eustace."

"That's the last of them, isn't it?" asked Wayne as he dropped the dollar into his pocket.

"Yes, that's the last. And thank you ever so much, Gordon. Did I tell you last week that I'd been sending a little money home to my mother ever since I got those first golf balls to fix? Yes, and I know she's tickled about it. You wouldn't think that a fellow could make money in school, would you?"

"Some fellows could, and some couldn't," answered Wayne. "Do you get any balls to mend nowadays?"

"Yes, quite often; and a good many clubs. I've got so I can put a new shaft on to a head in fine style."

"But you must have turned your room into a regular carpenter shop," laughed the other.

"No; I use a corner of the carriage room in the stable. Mr. Vance doesn't charge me anything for it; he's awfully kind. You might come over and see my 'repair shop' some day."

"I will, and I'll bring a club of Don's that has the leather hanging by the skin of its teeth; it's a disgrace to the study and ought to be fixed."

They had reached the library, and Wayne went to the shelves and began a hunt.

"Find one of those epitome things," suggested Gray.

"Where are they? Oh, I see." He laid his hand on a volume, but as he did so his eyes encountered the title of the one next it. "Ploetz's Epitome of Universal History," he read. "Who was it spoke of that once?" He took the book down and withdrew to the window. As he did so the volume opened apparently of its own accord at the three hundred and fifty-second page.

"Well, I'll be switched!" cried Wayne.

"What's up?" asked his companion, coming toward him.

"Why—er—nothing at all. I guess I'll take this with me."

Together they passed out, and parted at the corner of the gymnasium. Wayne hurried on to Turner Hall and sprang up two flights of stairs.

"I hope Benson's in," he said to himself as he knocked lustily at the door of No. 36. He was, and in a moment Wayne was crossing the study toward where the occupant sat by the open window reading something which looked but little like a text-book.

"Hello, Gordon!" cried Benson. "Glad to see you; sit

down and be happy." For reply Wayne opened the library book and laid it face up on the window seat.

"What's—" began Benson; then he stopped with a gasp. On the open pages rested a new two-dollar bill, folded once. "Did you find it there?" he asked in bewilderment. Wayne nodded.

"Well!" Benson took the bill and felt of it as though doubting its genuineness. "I must have slipped it in there to mark my place when Gray came in that day!"

"You must have," answered Wayne dryly. Benson flushed and looked worried.

"By Jove, Gordon, I'm awfully sorry! Such a stupid thing to do! I remember now that I took the book back that evening just before supper, and I suppose I didn't open it once. Do you think I ought to apologize to Gray?"

"No, he doesn't know but that you found it long ago; you know I told him you had. No, there's nothing to do but grab the money and put it somewhere where it won't get lost. You see, Benson, I don't want to be accused of taking it away with me," he added unkindly.

"Oh, I say, Gordon, let up!"

"All right," laughed Wayne, "we'll forget it. I'll take the book with me. And, by the way, if you feel that you'd like to make up to Gray for—for suspecting him, you know, why, bust a golf club or two and let him mend them."

On the stairs of Bradley Wayne encountered Paddy, who threw his arms about him and hugged him ecstatically.

"Hurrah! He's gone! He's went! He's departed!"

"Who?" gasped Wayne.

"Gardiner, the great, good, and only Gardiner! He took the 2.30 for home, and now I can get some peace and quiet. Honest Injun, Wayne, if he had stayed another week I should have been a gibbering idiot and gone around cutting people's throats with a long, keen blade!"

"Oh, dry up," laughed Wayne. "Have you been upstairs? Is Don there?"

"I have. He is not. Come, let us go to the village and celebrate at Caper's on soda water. Let us speed the parting guest. Gardiner's all right, Wayne, but, ah, he's terrible onaisy."

"I don't believe I'm supposed to drink soda water, Paddy, but I'll go and watch you. Have you seen Dave lately?"

"No, what's he been up to?"

"He's been breaking his own record with the hammer."

When Paddy heard the facts he was delighted, and proved it by dancing from side to side of the dusty roadway until out of breath.

"Old Dave will be pleased to death," he panted. "He's been awfully in the dumps since the handicaps. My, but I do hope he'll win out at the interscholastic!"

And then they went on to the village and sought out

the tiny shop where the enticing sign "Ice Cream Soda" flanked the doorway. And Paddy drank one of chocolate flavor in honor of Gardiner's departure and one of strawberry in celebration of Dave's success.

The following Wednesday afternoon Wayne went over the mile, while Professor Beck and Don and a little group of fellows looked on and cheered his progress after each lap. He put his whole mind and energy into the task, and never altered the hard pace he had set himself up to the last half of the last quarter, despite the warnings of Don and the professor, who both timed him.

"He's going too fast, I'm afraid," said Don sorrowfully.

"I fear so," answered the professor. "But maybe he knows what he can do; he's improved wonderfully since the handicaps."

When the last lap began Wayne let himself out just a trifle until at the end of the back stretch the little group was staring in surprise from the watches to the runner.

"He's done it easily," cried Don. "And look! Hanged if he isn't spurting!"

Down the stretch came Wayne, his head back, his arms at his side, and running as though he was being paced by a steam engine. Over the line he dashed and the two watches stopped.

"Five minutes eight and a fifth seconds!" cried Don.

"Five minutes eight and a fifth seconds!" echoed

the professor. The crowd clapped as Wayne trotted back, panting and flushed but evidently unwearied; and Don patted him joyfully on the shoulder.

"Eight and a fifth, Wayne!" he cried. Wayne looked for confirmation to the professor, who nodded as he dropped his watch back into his pocket.

"That will do for to-day, Gordon. Report at training table in the morning," he said.

Nine days later the track team, together with Professor Beck and two graduate coaches, assembled after supper in the gymnasium, were cheered individually and collectively by their schoolmates, and were conveyed to the station, where they embarked on the Pacific Express for the up-State city which was on the morrow to be the scene of the interscholastic meeting.

And with them went the hopes of Hillton.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INTERSCHOLASTIC MEET

It had rained in the night, and the young grass was intensely green in the great oval; the quarter mile of cinder track, fresh from the rollers, was smooth, firm, and springy, and the newly turned mold before the vaulting standard gave forth a pleasant odor beneath the rakes. The lime marks and circles shone glaring white in the afternoon sunlight and the bright colors of bonnet and dress and wrap vied in brilliancy with the banners of the contesting schools —with the deep blue of St. Eustace, the brown of Warrenton, the blue and white of Northern Collegiate, the maroon of Maddurn Hall, the green of Shrewsburg, the purple and white of Thracia Polytechnic, and the crimson of Hillton.

The blue and white was most in evidence, for the Northern Collegiate students were on home ground, while the others were visitors from far and near. The collegiate band was discoursing brazen two steps, the circling grand stands were buzzing with talk and laughter, the officials were hurrying, scurrying, hither and thither, and from near by,

behind the unlovely high board fences, the electric cars droned and clanged as they drew up to the entrance and discharged their loads. And overhead arched a softly blue May sky just flecked with tiny wads of cottonlike clouds. Northern Collegiate might have drawn a fair augury from that sky.

The clerk of the course was busy placing the runners for the first trial heat of the one-hundred-yard dash. Presently the long line was crouching on the mark, the pistol sounded, and the interscholastic meeting had begun. Other trial heats followed until the contestants for the sprints and the hurdles were sifted down to a few for each event. Meanwhile the broad jumpers were busy at the standard, and in the oval a little group were preparing for the shot putting.

The mile run was down on the card as the last event, and Wayne, who was entered for that only, looked on from the far side of the field, one of a group of many, in front of the dressing room. Paddy, who had in some way smuggled himself inside the ropes, sat beside him.

"We can't see very much from here," observed Paddy.

"Why don't you go across, then?"

"I'm afraid that marshal will ask me embarrassing questions; he's been glaring at me suspiciously for the last ten minutes. They're fixing the low hurdles over there; hope Don will win. He looked worried a while ago, I thought."

"I reckon he's all right," answered Wayne. "He was put out about Gaffney."

"What's the matter with Gaff?"

"Ankles lame or sore or something. Don was afraid he wouldn't be able to jump much. But I guess he's doing well enough."

"They're on the mark; three of them! Don and Perkins, and a St. Eustace chap."

"Varian, I reckon. Don said he'd get second or third at least."

"There they go!" The report of the pistol floated across the field to where the boys were sitting. "Don's taken the lead already! Go it, old fellow!"

And Don, though he couldn't possibly hear Paddy's command, nevertheless "went it" so well that at the sixth hurdle he was ten yards to the good, with Perkins close behind him. The white forms flashed up and down in the sunlight for a moment longer; then the race was over, and Hillton had begun the day bravely by capturing a first and a second, scoring eight points to St. Eustace's one.

But Fortune's face is ever turning, and in the next event, the one-hundred-yard dash, St. Eustace took first place and Hillton failed to score, the rest of the points going to Northern Collegiate's speedy sprinters. But in the four hundred and forty yards Hillton took both first and second again, increasing her lead by eight more units and leaving her dreaded rival far behind.

And so it went, Dame Fortune smiling and frowning alternately on the wearers of the crimson, until the sun had begun to drop back of the city roofs. Of the track events Hillton had now won three firsts, two seconds, and one third; St. Eustace, two firsts and three thirds; and the two schools had divided five points in the half-mile run, Whitehead having finished side by side with Brown, of St. Eustace, after a spurt down the cinders that brought the grand stand cheering to its feet.

Don had won the high hurdles in magnificent style from a Polytechnic youth by a short yard, a St. Eustace hurdler securing t ird place. Warrenton and St. Eustace had fought desperately for the tape in the two-hundred-and-twenty-yard dash, and the latter had gained a close decision, Hillton taking third place. Hillton had done well in the hurdles, fairly so in the middle distances, and poorly in the dashes; St. Eustace had excelled in the dashes and had failed to win better than third place in the hurdles.

The field events had sprung some surprises on the wearers of the crimson. The pole vault had netted them nothing, the deep blue having taken eight points and Northern Collegiate one.

Gaffney's weak ankle had interfered to some extent with his performance in the broad jump, and his best try, twenty-one feet eight inches and a half, only secured three points for his school, St. Eustace scoring first place. Again, in the high jump, the latter academy had excelled and

both first and second places had gone to her clever youngsters.

In the shot putting both St. Eustace and Hillton had failed signally, although the latter had managed to capture third place, Northern Collegiate, in the person of a big, broad-shouldered youth, easily winning the event and breaking the only record of the meeting, with a put of forty-seven feet six inches. And so, with the hammer throw still to be decided, and the mile yet to be run, the scores stood:

St. Eustace, 36½;
Hillton, 29½;
Northern Collegiate, 11;
Scattering, 14.

But the hopes of the Hillton supporters were bright, for St. Eustace had already dropped out of the hammer throw, and only Trowbridge, of Northern Collegiate, and Dave and Hardy had qualified for the finals; Trowbridge with a throw of one hundred and forty-three feet, Dave with one of one hundred and forty-two feet eight inches, and Hardy with one of one hundred and forty feet four inches. And now Trowbridge had the ball and wire for his final tries.

Victory seemed already his, and his freckled face held an expression of radiant confidence. The previous competitors, together with the judges and the scorer and a few privileged college men, watched with interest as he swung

the weight around with long arms and sent it flying across the turf. Then the tape was moved over, and in a moment the distance was announced:

"Hundred and forty-six feet three inches."

Trowbridge shrugged his shoulders as he took the hammer for the next attempt and put more speed into the swing. But he used his feet poorly and the figures dropped back to three inches under one hundred and forty-five feet. A shade of uneasiness darkened the confident face, and Trowbridge set his lips tightly as he raised the weight. Then the long arms whirled, the body spun around, and the hammer whizzed through the air. The tape was laid to the ground.

"Hundred and forty-seven feet nine inches," said a judge.

Trowbridge stepped from the ring with a scowl, and Dave took his place. As the Hillton lad gripped his hammer his eyes fell on Paddy, who had joined the little throng, his desire to witness Dave's work having overcome his fear of the marshal. Paddy grinned encouragement, and Dave, with a lurking smile on his serious countenance, responded with a portentous wink. Then the hammer went up, swung around in its widening circle, and flew away.

"Hundred and forty-three feet three inches."

Once more, and again the tape and the careful measurement.

"Hundred and forty-eight feet five inches."

A ripple of surprise and applause went through the audience. Trowbridge looked sad. Paddy executed a quiet dance at the edge of the throng. Back came the hammer. Dave gripped it with an air of determination, and placed his feet with greater care than before. Up went the weight, around spun the boy like a dervish, once, twice, thrice; there was a sudden quick stiffening of the muscles, a set to the shoulders, and the twelve pounds of iron sped away at a tangent and ripped the sod at a point farther from the circle than any preceding throw.

"One hundred and forty-nine feet one inch," announced the judges. Dave had won first place for Hillton.

He stepped out, dragging his beloved hammer after him, with a face that strove hard to hide his happiness. Hardy clapped him on the back as he passed to join Paddy, and the latter beamed upon him like the Cheshire cat. Hardy went in, glad of Dave's victory over Trowbridge, but hoping for a victory, in turn, over Dave. But that was not to be. His first throw was a sorry attempt; his second scarcely better. But at the third try he put his whole soul into the task and his whole weight behind the flying ball, and when the judges stepped back they announced:

"One hundred and forty-eight feet eleven inches."

"Eight points to Hillton!" cried some one, and several boys clapped loudly. Then the group broke up, Dave, Hardy, and Paddy mingling with the crowd that flowed across toward the dressing room, joy in their hearts.

"Ready for the mile!" called a voice, and in answer a squad of boys trotted across the field toward the starting point. Wayne and Whitehead were in the van and Paddy waved to them as they passed.

"Go in and win, Old Virginia!" And Wayne nodded smilingly, and hoped that his face wasn't quite as white as it felt. Professor Beck, Don, and two Hillton coaches were waiting, and Don helped him off with his coat, and trotted along beside him while he limbered up.

"Wayne, this is what you've got to do," he whispered. "Get to the front as soon as you can and look for Sturgis. If he's ahead, stay with him no matter what pace he sets. If he's behind, wait for him. Pay no attention to any others. It doesn't matter who wins as long as St. Eustace doesn't get a place. Sturgis is their only man that we need fear; so freeze to him, and don't let him get away from you. Look out for tricks, though, for St. Eustace is going to try them, I'm sure. If she can get first or second men in she'll have us beaten; if she can win third place she'll tie us. Win if you can, but, whatever happens, *down Sturgis!*"

"Hurry up, milers!" called the clerk of the course. Don gave Wayne an affectionate clap on the shoulder.

"Go in, old man," he whispered, "and remember Hillton every minute!"

There were twelve entries for the mile. St. Eustace, beside her crack long-distance runner Sturgis, had entered

House and Gould, both men to be feared. Hillton was represented by Wayne and Whitehead, both new men and inexperienced; Hillton's chances were not considered very good by the other schools. Northern Collegiate and Shrewsburg had each entered two runners, and the other schools were represented by one man apiece. Northern Collegiate was doing a deal of talking about a youth named Pope, of whom little was known to the other schools, and who was spoken of as a "dark horse" that stood a fair chance of winning. Wayne found himself placed between Pope, who turned out to be a heavily-built fellow of apparently nineteen, and a pale and nervous boy much younger in years, whose brown ribbon bore in gold letters the emblem "W. A. A. A." Gould had the place next to the inner edge of the track, and Sturgis and Whitehead were together near the outer edge.

The spectators had begun to leave the grounds and the stands already presented little barren patches. The shadow of the small building wherein was the dressing room stretched far across the oval, and the sun was fast sinking behind the forest of roofs and chimneys in the west. Contestants in previous events were dressed and stood about the turf to watch the last and deciding struggle for the championship of the year.

Pope was restively digging his toes into the path while the penalties for false starting were being explained with much vehemence by the starter. The Warrenton runner

on Wayne's left was working his arms back and forth as though he was going to win the race on his hands and feared his elbows would get stiff. Wayne himself was undeniably nervous. It was his first appearance in a public contest, barring the cross-country run at Hillton the preceding autumn, and the thought of what failure would mean was beginning to take the starch out of him. But nervousness was the one thing that had been prohibited above all others; and so he tried to forget about the possibilities of failure and had begun to wonder, without much interest in the problem, how many men it required to keep the grass cut on the big oval when the starter's voice brought his thoughts back at a leap.

"*On your mark!*"

Pope growled something to him about dull spikes and loose tracks, but Wayne made no answer. He was looking straight ahead down the broad path, his thoughts in a tumult.

"*Set!*"

Twelve bodies leaned farther forward and there was a perceptible sound of intaking breath up and down the line. Then, when it seemed to many that another moment of suspense would make them shout or dance or do something else equally ridiculous, *bang!* went the pistol, and the line leaped forward and broke into fragments as the runners sped away.

CHAPTER XXIV

WON AT THE FINISH

Wayne had made a good beginning; he was already, ere the timers' watches had ticked thrice, well in toward the left of the track and one of the first five men. He looked for Sturgis and found that dreaded youth close beside him. Before them were Pope, a Maddurn Hall boy, and the pale-faced youngster who had stood beside Wayne. Pope was making the pace, a rather fast one it seemed, and was running with a great expenditure of strength. Sturgis kept beside Wayne until the turn; then, as the latter took the inside edge, he fell in behind. Wayne wished devoutly that he would go ahead. He didn't like the pace, which was too fast for the first quarter of a mile race, and he would have preferred to have been farther in the rear. When the back stretch began Wayne therefore decreased his speed a little. It had the desired effect. In a few seconds Sturgis was beside him again; in a few more he was a pace or two ahead. Wayne could not but admire the St. Eustace boy's running. He kept well up on his toes, his thighs moved seemingly of their own volition, and his stride was all ease and swing.

At the next turn Sturgis ran close to the inner edge of the track and Wayne dropped a pace or two farther back and cast a fleeting glance over his shoulder. The balance of the contestants were strung pretty well down the back stretch, but Whitehead was about midway between first man and last. Pope had diminished his pace a little and the Warrenton boy seemed anxious to take his place. Then the group about the start was reached and cheers for the leader from the Collegiate contingent rent the air; then one after another of the runners received his applause and went by. Wayne caught a momentary glimpse of Paddy and Don beside the track as he began the second quarter.

Save that the last of the runners began to straggle a little, there was no change in the second quarter. Wayne held his place just behind Sturgis and ran on with a steady, easy stride. Again the start was reached and the race was half run.

"Time enough, Pope!" called a Collegiate coach, and at the same moment Wayne saw from the corner of his eye a runner draw slowly up beside him, hang there a second, and pass ahead. His colors proclaimed him a Collegiate runner and Wayne watched him with interest. By the time the turn was reached he was slightly behind the Warrenton boy, who was still at second place. Then Pope swerved aside, Warrenton was in the lead, with the second Collegiate runner close behind, and Pope had dropped back to a position just ahead of Sturgis. And now Sturgis, too,

appeared desirous of falling back, for his pace diminished and the distance between him and the leader grew. But Wayne refused the invitation to pass and suited his speed to that of the wearer of the blue.

Half of the third quarter had been left behind when Wayne heard steps and the sound of breathing beside him again, and in another moment Gould had spurted by and Wayne was obliged to swerve slightly in order to avoid colliding with Sturgis, who upon the appearance of Gould had again lessened his speed. Mindful of his orders, but full of doubt, Wayne in turn fell back and Gould passed on and took the inner side behind Pope. Sturgis was still back of Wayne, and the latter slowed up yet more, striving to secure again a position behind the St. Eustace's crack. But Sturgis refused to take the lead. The Maddurn Hall boy was dropping back fast, and at the middle of the turn Warrenton still led, followed in order by the two Northern Collegiate runners, Gould, Wayne, and Sturgis. As the home stretch began Gould drew ahead, running superbly, and as the line was crossed he was in the lead by a dozen yards or so, and St. Eustace cheers filled the air.

Then the last quarter began and found Wayne in perplexity. Gould was every instant increasing his lead, although Pope and his fellow-runner had taken up the chase. Warrenton was clearly out of it, and ere the first turn was reached Gould, the two Northern Collegiate runners, and Wayne were speeding along in the order named.

Wayne was troubled. He asked himself whether, orders or no orders, he should stay back there when Gould was already thirty yards or more ahead of him and still spurting. Don and the others had quite evidently overestimated Sturgis's importance and underestimated Gould's. And if something was not done and done speedily the race was already St. Eustace's. As though to aid him in his decision, Sturgis began to lag until, although Wayne could not see him, he appeared to that anxious youth to be practically out of the running.

"Here goes!" said Wayne to himself.

They were on the turn now and he left his place beside the inner edge and passed Pope and was soon alongside the other Collegiate runner. The latter gave him a hard race, but ere the back stretch was reached had yielded second place, and Wayne dashed on in what seemed a hopeless effort to reach Gould.

Back at the finish Don pulled his cap over his face and groaned.

"It's all up; Wayne has fallen into the trap!" One of the Hillton coaches said something under his breath, and Professor Beck frowned grimly.

"But you told him?" asked the coach. "He had his orders?"

"Yes," answered Don. "But you can see! And I suppose he's not altogether to blame; it was so smoothly done."

The coach ground the turf under his heel. Across the oval, Gould had almost reached the last turn, Wayne was some twenty yards behind him, still running like a streak, and back of Wayne sped Sturgis, easily, gracefully, taking his pace from the Hillton runner and covering the ground without overexertion or worry. Behind him again streamed the rest, Whitehead running side by side with Pope and a Shrewsburg chap vainly trying to pass them. But Gould's work was done, and at the beginning of the turn he slowed up, weary and panting, and soon Wayne had passed him, tuckered but happy.

There comes a moment in every long-distance race when the last ounce of strength and endurance and the last breath seems to have been expended; after that the runner simply performs the impossible. Wayne had reached that moment. His legs ached, his breath tore itself from his lungs, and it seemed that further effort was out of the question. But the finish line was almost in sight, and so he gripped his moist fingers tighter about the corks and hugged the edge of the cinders. At least, he told himself, St. Eustace was beaten!

And then he heard the soft *pat, pat, pat,* of steps behind him, and at the same instant cries of "St. Eustace! St. Eustace!" Not daring to look behind, he struggled on in an agony of suspense until the turn was left and the broad path stretched clear and straight before him to the finish, where, strange and distorted to his strained

eyes, forms leaped and gesticulated beside the track. Then the pursuer drew alongside and Wayne caught the gleam of deep blue ribbon, and could have shouted aloud in rage and mortification had there been breath enough in his body. In a flash he saw it all: Gould's deceptive spurt, his own blind idiotic credulity, and Sturgis's pursuit, with him to make the pace. St. Eustace had tricked him finely! For an instant the thought of yielding presented itself, but only to be routed in the next breath by a resolve to keep on, to contest the race to the very end, to run until he dropped.

Sturgis was now a yard in the lead, running well, but he was by no means fresh nor unwearied. Wayne gritted his teeth, gulped down a sob, and put every muscle and nerve to the test. He remembered a remark of Don's: "When you are ready to drop, just think that the other man is worse off, and keep going."

"He is, he is!" Wayne told himself. "He's done up! I can win! I *will* win!"

The tape was close before them now. Sturgis was plainly in distress, for he, too, had made a hard race. The crowd at the finish was shrieking unintelligible things. Inch by inch the red ribbon was winning its place beside the blue. Ten yards from the judges Wayne was even with Sturgis; five yards more and he had gained, but scarcely enough to be noticed by the throng.

"Hillton's race! Come on, Gordon, *come on!*"

"St. Eustace wins! St. Eustace! St. Eustace!"

Sturgis threw his head back and strove to draw away, but Wayne, with unseeing eyes, almost reeling, lifted his arms weakly, called upon the last gasp of breath in his body, and hurled himself forward in a final despairing effort. And then the little white tape was gone and he lay in a tumbled heap upon the path.

"Hillton first," announced the judges.

"Four minutes fifty-eight and four fifths," said the time-keepers.

Hillton had won the interscholastic.

CHAPTER XXV

FINIS CORONAT OPUS

THE victors sat at banquet. To be sure, as regarded variety of viand and culinary excellence it left much to desire; in fact it was, I believe, simply called "Dinner" on the *menu* card. But it answered all the purposes of a Roman feast. Victory presided, Happiness and Merriment were the guests of honor, and Hunger waited at table. Professor Beck was there, and one of the coaches, and Don, and Wayne, and Whitehead, and Dave, and Gaffney, and Perkins, and Connor, and Hardy, and Kendall, and several others; and every one talked as much as he could and ate indiscriminately of all on the board, and was wonderfully, radiantly joyful. The hotel management had given them a little room to themselves; fortunately for the peace of the other guests, for it was necessary to cheer loudly and often.

The events of the day were discussed from start to finish and the official summary of the meeting was passed from hand to hand around the board and the figures eagerly scanned.

"Great Cæsar!" muttered Don as he looked it over;

"to think that two points moved from the first column to the second would have beaten us! It was a narrow squeak, Wayne; if you hadn't finished a scant foot ahead of Sturgis——"

"Let's see it," said Wayne. Don passed the sheet to him, and this is what he saw:

SUMMARY

1st place counts 5. 2d " " 3. 3d " " 1.	Hillton.	St. Eustace.	Northern Collegiate.	Warrenton.	Shrewsburg.	Thracia Polytechnic.	Maddurn Hall.
220-yard hurdles.....	8	1					
100-yard dash.....		5	4				
440-yard run	8	1					
120-yard hurdles.....	5	1				3	
880-yard run	2½	2½			3		1
220-yard dash.....	1	5		3			
1-mile run.....	5	3		1			
Broad jump	3	5	1				
Pole vault.....		8	1				
High jump.....	1	8					
Putting 12-pound shot	1		5	3			
Throwing 12-pound hammer.....	8		1				
Total	42½	39½	12	7	3	3	1

"It was close," said Wayne, as he handed the summary on to Connor, who sat at his right. "And," he added in a low voice, "when I think how nearly I lost the thing for you, Don, I feel like kicking myself back to Hillton."

At that moment the door was burst open and Paddy's flushed and exultant face peered in.

"Don't want to bother you, fellows," he cried, "but thought you'd like to hear the news. We won at Marshall; Hillton 4, St. Eustace 0!" He shied an evening paper

across the room at Dave and disappeared again. As the door closed Professor Beck sprang to his feet.

"Now, boys, three times three for the nine, and every one yell!" And every one did yell. And then the paper was passed around and the brief account of the baseball game was read and reread.

"By Jove," cried Don, "your friend Gray's gone and done it again!"

"Done what?" asked Wayne.

"Made a home run; and in the last inning, too! What do you think of that?"

Whereupon Wayne tried to snatch the paper from Don, and only succeeded in upsetting the contents of the latter's tumbler into Professor Beck's salad.

But there is a limit even to the capacity of a triumphant track team, and after a while, when Professor Beck and the coach had made short, earnest speeches, had been cheered to the echo, and had left the room, Don made himself heard and announced that nominations for the captaincy of the team for the ensuing year were in order. Instantly Gaffney and Dave were on their feet, and the former was recognized.

"I don't see any use in fussing with nominations and such stuff; we've all eaten too much. I move you that Donald Cunningham be re-elected by acclamation and that we all go home."

Cheering and laughter, cries of "Yes, yes, Cunning-

ham!" and "Second the motion!" arose; and Don got up and waited a chance to speak. When the uproar had died down for a moment he said:

"I thank you, fellows, for the nomination, but I can not——"

"Don, Don, Donald C.!" chanted Wayne, and Dave took up the refrain, and in a moment the room was again a pandemonium.

"Don, Don, Donald C.,
One big captain he!"

improvised Wayne, and the rest caught eagerly at the doggerel and chanted it lustily to the accompaniment of weird music produced by knives and tumblers. Don held up a hand appealingly.

"Fellows, please come to order!" he cried. And when the tumult had subsided he went on: "I can't accept the nomination, although I feel—recognize——"

"Hear! hear!" bawled Dave.

"Although I appreciate the honor. I thank you all. I am glad that we won to-day and hope that we will repeat the victory next year. I will do my best to keep my place on the team, but I must refuse the captaincy."

"No, no!" cried his hearers.

"I don't feel that I can spare the time from my lessons next year, and I hope you will excuse me and elect some one to take my place. If I may be allowed to nominate a candidate——"

Cries of "Yes, yes! Go ahead!"

"I nominate for captain Wayne Gordon."

A chorus of applause broke out. Wayne stared in bewilderment about the board. "Gordon! Gordon!" cried several; and Whitehead and Dave seconded the nomination in unison.

"Are there any other nominations?" asked Don.

Wayne leaped to his feet. "I don't quite know whether this is a joke or not." He frowned inquiringly at Don.

Don smiled and shook his head.

"Speech!" called some one.

"But if it isn't a joke, it's—it's silly rot. I am no more fit to be captain than I am to—to be principal."

"Sit down," shouted Dave, "you're out of order!" But Wayne paid no attention; instead he looked quite serious as he continued.

"To prove what I say, fellows, I'm going to make a confession. You—you ought to know about it. I won the mile race to-day——"

"You bet you did!" said some one. "You're all right!"

"But I didn't deserve it. I came near losing it by—by my pigheadedness. I don't deserve any credit; fact is, I ought to be put off the team."

The fellows had quieted down and were listening in surprise and curiosity. Don put up a hand and tried to pull him back into his seat.

"Shut up, Wayne," he pleaded in a whisper.

"To-day," continued Wayne, "I was told to get behind Sturgis and to hang to him to the end of the race. Well, I didn't; I thought I knew more than the coaches, and Professor Beck and the captain, and every one. And when St. Eustace put up a game by sending Gould ahead as though he was going to win the race, I just let instructions go and went after him. You all know how nearly Sturgis came to winning——"

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Connor.

"And if he had won St. Eustace would have got the championship, and it would have been all due to my foolishness. I haven't felt right about it since you fellows were so kind and cheered me, and—and all; and I've wanted to tell you the truth, and I have; and I'm glad you gave me the chance. And I thank you for the nomination, but couldn't take it even if you still wanted me to."

Wayne sat down, and three fellows were instantly on their feet. Don recognized Whitehead.

"Look here, fellows," he said, speaking quickly and vehemently, "I don't deny that Gordon made a mistake, but I want to tell you that he wasn't to blame. The trick would have deceived any fellow that wasn't experienced; if it had been me instead of Gordon, I would have fallen into the trap just as he did, and I'm not sure that I'd been so ready to own up and tell the truth about it, either. Gordon made a mistake, but he ran the finest sort of a race:

he's got lots of pluck and lots of go, and we all like him; and I think he will make a good captain, if Cunningham won't accept re-election; and I move that we prove to him that we don't think any less of him for his mistake by asking him to accept the nomination."

"Good! Seconded!" was heard on all sides, and in a moment the motion had carried unanimously. Wayne was very busy making bread pills, his eyes on the table cloth.

"Silence gives assent," said Don gayly. "Are there any other nominations?" None spoke. "I move that the nominations be closed," said Dave. "I second that motion," said Whitehead. "And I move that the election be—be— Oh, I mean let's go ahead and elect Gordon," concluded Whitehead amid a laugh.

"Well, I can't see the use of balloting," replied Don, "and as the proceedings have been out of order all evening I guess we might as well continue to have them so. Suppose we take a rising vote?"

"Yes! Rising vote! Go ahead!"

"Fellows, all those in favor of the election of Wayne Gordon to the captaincy of the track team for the ensuing year will so signify by rising."

Every fellow save Wayne was on his feet.

"Gordon is elected," said Don.

"Unanimously!" cried Perkins.

"Fellows," continued the ex-captain, "I call for three cheers for Gordon."

And they were given with a will. Wayne, rather pale and uncomfortable, arose.

"Speech! speech!" laughed a number. Wayne cleared his throat, opened his mouth, shut it again, looked appealingly at Don, and sank back into his chair. But the team was not satisfied, and renewed calls for a speech arose.

"Speak your piece, Wayne!" called Dave, and Wayne got up again and started bravely.

"I can't make a speech. But I thank you for what you've done, fellows. I'm afraid you've made a mistake in electing me; I don't know much about athletics, but I'll learn; perhaps Don here will help me."

"All I can," answered that youth readily.

"I've learned a good bit since I came to Hillton, and I reckon I can learn more. I've learned that it's a mighty good thing to do as you're told, and to obey authority, and not to think that you know everything, because you don't; at least, I don't."

"You know how to run!" cried Kendall, and the remark was laughingly applauded.

"As I said," continued Wayne, "I'm afraid you fellows have made a mistake, but—but I'll try to prove that you haven't. I hope every one of you will help me and try to excuse any blunders I may make; for I'm bound to make lots; I'm not Donald Cunningham, you know."

A murmur of applause arose.

"I never can be as good a captain as he has been——"

The murmur grew into a cheer, and it was fully a minute ere Wayne could continue.

"And I don't expect to. But"—he looked earnestly around the circle of flushed and happy faces—"but I'll try my level best, fellows, and I'll do all I know how for you and—and for the honor of the school!"

THE END

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